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VOL. VI.

HERRMANN'S FAITH AND MORALS

# FAITH AND MORALS

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AS RITSCHL DEFINED IT

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AS UNDERSTOOD IN ROMANISM AND PROTESTANTISM

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# Biographical Note

WILHELM HERRMANN was born at Melkow, near Schönhausen on the Elbe, on December 6, 1846. His father was a country minister, of whom his son says that "he understood Schleiermacher's theology well, and the religious life of peasant people still better." His son received his preliminary education at the Gymnasium, or classical high school, in Stendal, and in the autumn of 1866 proceeded to the University of Halle, where he studied for four years. During three of them he had the good fortune to live as amanuensis with old Professor Tholuck, a teacher who forms a link between Dr Herrmann and many of our own older theologians. The friendship thus began with Tholuck lasted until his death some ten years later.

On the outbreak of the Franco-German War the young theological student entered the 26th Infantry, and served through the campaign. Returning from active service, he passed his theological examination at Halle, and then, in German fashion, went as tutor for two years to a family living near Magdeburg. In 1874 he came back to Halle, and made successful application for recognition as Privat-Docent, presenting as his thesis an essay on "*Gregorii Nysseni sententiae de salute adipiscenda.*"[1] Soon afterwards he met Ritschl for the first time at Tholuck's house, being, however, already acquainted with his writings, and, indeed, prepared to attach himself, in a general way, to the view of theology there maintained. The acquaintance thus formed ripened quickly into a close friendship; and Ritschl, in writing a few months later about his visit to Halle, speaks of his pleasurable intercourse with young

[1] *The views of Gregory of Nyssa regarding the obtaining of Salvation.*

Herrmann. It is interesting to note that about a year later Ritschl first came in contact with another famous adherent of his school, Adolf Harnack. Among Herrmann's first public duties was the conduct of the religious instruction in the gymnasium at Halle, and here he introduced a primer of Ritschl's, which, however, despite the active interest of the author and the zeal of the teacher, was not a distinct success. The matter brought teacher and author together all the same, and Dr Herrmann reckons his intercourse with Ritschl at this period, both in person and by letter, as having, along with his early home-life and his time with Tholuck, had the most powerful influence on his development.

Ritschl's opponents soon found that they were no longer confronted by a single man, but by a group; and in the discussion occasioned by the appearance of Ritschl's great work *Justification and Reconciliation*, Herrmann, by reviews and articles in the

*Theologische Literaturzeitung* and the *Christliche Welt*, fought hard on Ritschl's side.

Dr Herrmann has himself given a general review of the aims he has set before himself in his literary activity. His chief concern has been to show that the Christian faith is rightly understood as trust in the power of Personal Life which reveals itself and lets itself be felt in the world. In the second place, he has maintained that this faith is independent of all scientific knowledge, and finally he has laboured to show the nature of the connection between religious faith and morality. His first book, *Metaphysics and Theology* (1876),[1] dealt with the second of these points, namely, the independent character of faith; and the same subject was treated more fully three years later in the more important work *Religion in its Relation to Science and Morality*.[2] The problem is there worked out

[1] *Metaphysik und Theologie.*

[2] *Die Religion im Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit.*

in dependence on the Kantian theory of knowledge, and in this book Herrmann was the first to use the expression 'value-judgment,' which has played such a large part in discussions on 'Ritschlianism.' The book was commended by Ritschl as "the doctrine of method appropriate to his system." The right understanding of the Christian faith is the subject of a series of pamphlets, namely, *The Significance of the Doctrine of Inspiration for the Protestant Church*,[1] *Why does our Faith require Historic Facts?*[2] *The Notion of Revelation*,[3] *Certainty in Faith and Freedom in Theology*,[4] *The Protestant Faith and the Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*,[5] *What is the Point at Issue in the Controversy regarding the Apostle's Creed?*[6] and to the same theme

[1] *Die Bedeutung der Inspirationslehre für die evang. Kirche.*

[2] *Warum bedarf unser Glaube geschichtliche Thatsachen.*

[3] *Der Begriff der Offenbarung.*

[4] *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens und die Freiheit der Theologie.*

[5] *Der evang. Glaube und die Theologie Albrecht Ritschl's.*

[6] *Worum handelt es sich in dem Streit um das Apostolicum.*

is dedicated what may be said to be Dr Herrmann's greatest work, the only one that has yet appeared in English, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, 1884.[1] A Scottish critic has said of this last that while "provokingly devoid of order or method it gives a more vivid impression than any other Ritschlian production of the real religious interest animating most of the adherents of that school." Ritschl himself wrote to its author: "I would call it a devotional book were it not also directed 'ad destruenda praejudicia theologica.' Your words are like still drops of water falling one after another on one spot and able to wear a hole even through stone." Dr Herrmann has since turned his energies to the more vigorous exposition of the fundamental ideas of morality in their historical development. This is the subject of his *Sketch of Ethics*, 1901,[2] a short but important book which seems doomed to remain

[1] *Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott.*
[2] *Ethik*, Mohr's *Grundriss* series.

untranslated, and two pamphlets, *Roman Catholic and Protestant Morality*,[1] and *The Instructions of Jesus in Regard to Morality: their Use and Abuse* (1903).[2]

Professor Herrmann was called to Marburg as teacher of Systematic Theology in the year that saw the publication of *Religion in its Relation to Science and Morality*. In 1888 he married the daughter of one of his colleagues, J. Bergmann, professor of philosophy. We saw that when a student he remained during his whole course at Halle, not, as is perhaps more usual, dividing his time between several universities. And similarly, as professor he has remained for twenty-four years at Marburg, refusing calls to Heidelberg in 1887, Halle in 1897, and this year to Göttingen. In Marburg, any day during the semester, he may be seen strolling up to his lecture room, or, in company with one or two students,

[1] *Römische und evangelische Sittlichkeit.*

[2] *Die sittliche Weisungen Jesu; ihr rightiger und ihr falscher Gebranch.*

native or foreign, combining the pleasures of a country walk with theological instruction or controversy. On such excursions Dr Herrmann gives every encouragement to the presentation of difficulties or of objections to his own teaching, and is himself untiring in sympathetic and earnest reply. There may be those who will forget much of what they heard in the class-room who can never forget pausing in some forest glade where the sunlight flickered through the beeches, and listening while, to use Herrmann's own words regarding another, "sharply and exactly he spoke of what moved his heart."

R. W. S.

# FAITH

## As Ritschl defined it

# Introduction by the Translator

THIS address, originally delivered in October 1890, only a few months after Ritschl's death, has here and there the tone of an oration on the departed master and friend. Professor Herrmann sees in Ritschl the champion of simplicity and honesty against a prevailing professionalism and formalism; and he holds that Ritschl's battle-cry was just Luther's. Faith, according to both, is not belief in any Church or in any doctrine; it is neither assent to the truth of the narratives of Scripture, nor is it acceptance of propositions in theology. It is a spiritual experience of an overpowering revelation of God, and this revelation comes to man through the circumstances in which he realises, in his own life, contact with the inner life of Jesus Christ.

In Professor Herrmann's view Faith begins with a guess after a power behind Nature,—a guess resting on various grounds but always involving some moral results. But these moral results lead to little that is satisfactory, till in Jesus Christ's life and teaching we find that the moral requirements after which we have striven have been recognised and fulfilled; and so we know that the power we guessed at is beneficent and has been at work here in Christ's life coming into touch with us. Through Christ accordingly we come to be sure of God.

Professor Herrmann maintains that, while Luther rightly and clearly stated this true notion of what faith is, it did not thoroughly penetrate the churches of the Reformation, and has not completely prevailed even yet. Our present difficulties in connection with sacerdotalism and with the candid acceptance of the results of critical investigation into Biblical literature are due, he would say, to the fact that the Roman Catholic notion of faith still

lingers among us, to our intellectual and religious confusion. The urgent theological task of to-day is to establish among the people Luther's clear comprehension of what Christian faith really is.

There also enters one other line of thought. It is necessary to make a clear distinction between Theology, where facts are matters of personal conviction, and Natural Science, in which facts are recognised and established by coldly impersonal proof.

It is hoped that the headings which have been inserted over each paragraph by the translators may be a guide to the course of the argument in detail. One or two notes have been added within square brackets.

R. W. S.

WIMBLEDON, *December* 1903.

# FAITH

## As Ritschl defined it[1]

*Theology is not a pure science; it must be dogmatic.*

The patrons and members of the University expect of their Rector that his first official act should be to communicate something which may prove his own right and that of his Faculty to be recognised as part of the University. This task seems to be more difficult for us theologians than for the professors of other Faculties; at least a glance at the theological rectorial addresses of the last ten years makes one suspect so. Not seldom the discourse has been occupied with the proof that

[1 The German title is *Der evangelische Glaube und die Theologie Albrecht Ritschl's.*]

theology is a science. Now, if this particularly needs to be proved, there must be grounds which make it doubtful. The chief of these is this. A theological faculty cannot entrust the representation of its historical branches to the linguist or historian versed in the history of Christianity. We always want something more from such a scholar, something in the giving of which he becomes himself a theologian. From the theologian we expect not only that he should know the history of the Christian Church, but also that he should make the Church's interest his own. In his own special way he has to make the same endeavour that the Church has to make in her united life, namely, that Christianity shall appear as something living and present. We theologians fulfil this Christian duty when we defend in our scientific work the convictions of the Christian faith. It is naturally presupposed that in doing this we ourselves are convinced of the truth of the Christian faith. Yet this conviction, without which theological

work is impossible, constitutes the special object of inquiry in the course of study which it is my task to represent in this University. In Systematic Theology, in Dogmatic and Ethic, the ideas of the Christian faith have to be expounded in their inner connection, and traced back to their source. In this process it ought at the same time to be made clear how Christian faith justifies to itself the truth of what it believes. The individual holders of the various theological chairs are in every case only theologians in so far as they are in some sense dogmatists.

*Theology is censured on this account.*

Now this is just what is said to divide theology from all other science. What sort of a science is it that lets itself be circumscribed by unalterable, rigidly-held convictions? To be worthy of the respect of science, must we not make these convictions themselves our problem? Instead, however, of pursuing the course of free inquiry into reality, do we not

in point of fact stand before our object with bound hands? Instead of having the dutiful objectivity with which the man of science simply bows before the facts he perceives, are we not ruled by preconceptions in the shape of unassailable judgments regarding all that is, or can be, true in that sphere? Nay, more! The Christian religion stands or falls by the reality and power of certain facts which we say we find present in history. A Christian theologian is unable to put these facts in question. Then he can hardly count himself among historical inquirers; for if a matter is fairly ancient a true historical inquirer is ready to say that every fact becomes a question. In short, where Dogmatic Theology reigns free inquiry ceases.

*But we ourselves assert the difference between personal conviction and scientific proof.*

So runs the accusation. We do not fear it, for we defy it. We admit that it is quite true. We do not stand free before the object of our

study, but are desirous of being determined by it in our most inward thoughts. Thus we would be surrendering our very selves if we were willing to allow that the conception of our object were as boundlessly changeable as are the scientific conceptions of things. If the character of science is on this account denied to theology, we must just be content. We know quite well that we do not belong to the circle of science which, apart from any influence of personal conviction, perceives the reality that can be demonstrated. We can well comfort ourselves by the reflection that we are not thus forced out of that circle by others, but step outside of our own will, because we are, perhaps in a higher degree than any others, forced to consider the question of what Science is, and because we have a knowledge of Faith.

*When we speak of faith our thoughts turn to Albrecht Ritschl.*

But if we thus cut ourselves off from science, in that sense, we do not by so doing

cut ourselves off from those scientific students who have another vindication of existence alongside of science. Perhaps if we observe the friendly relations to men of science which we enjoy to so great a degree here in Marburg, that may show us the way to give to theology itself another relation to science than that which seems to result from the remarks we have just made. But first, that we may arrive at a common understanding, we will speak of that upon which the distinction is grounded, namely, of faith in the Christian sense; and I enter this subject the more readily that it compels me to think of one to whom the Christian Church owes her deepest thanks, the great theologian Albrecht Ritschl, who died last March. Many of us can remember his vigorous, manly personality. All know at least his name. The religious and political press has seen to that. In the last decade of Ritschl's life we are presented with a spectacle the like of which the history of the evangelical Church has never before furnished.

A scholar, holding himself entirely aloof from ecclesiastical party strife, draws upon himself the equal hatred of the two parties which otherwise fight as irreconcilable enemies. An author whose writings occasionally present considerable difficulties even to his brother theologians, is made a subject on which to exercise their critical powers by writers for whom it is evidently no easy matter to keep command of a fairly long train of thought. A man who in the evening of his days drew into his circle a small number of academic theologians, is pointed out by influential leaders of numerous theological groups as a monstrous peril for the Church. The polemic against him and his school was so carried on that it seemed in fact as if real anxiety had robbed his adversaries of the power of reasonable reflection. It is a method hardly found anywhere else, to put forward a sentence which has been produced for the purpose as a quotation from the opponent, and then to use this invented

quotation to fix the severest blame on him. Yet in the dispute with Ritschl and his school this has been the most usual form of polemic. So it was just last August in the large assembly held under the auspices of the Brandenburg Church Council. Ritschl never defended himself in this struggle. He did his work, and for the rest was silent.

*The ground of the hostility to Ritschl was his unsparing exposure of professionalism.*

There must be something in Ritschl and his work to explain the passionate attacks on him. It cannot be for no reason that men who otherwise have some regard to their love of truth, are in the controversy with him constrained to say the reverse of truth so openly. Such a widespread movement is not to be explained by personal antipathy. Is it the case that the ministers who have passed through his school have roused opposition by bringing confusion into their congregations and causing trouble to their ecclesiastical

superiors? Nay; the very opposite has been repeatedly testified by the Council of the Church in which Ritschl worked. According to this evidence Ritschl's pupils have rather been distinguished in the pastoral office by waiting quietly and faithfully on their glorious ministry, not moved by the perilous impulse to put themselves forward in the noise of party assemblies. The reason lies in something else, which, for those who knew him more closely, found strong expression in Ritschl's personal bearing. He observed in religious intercourse an extraordinary strictness with himself. That he lived in the world of ideas contained in the Christian faith, certainly made itself so strongly felt in his conversation that a less powerful intellect was apt to become tired with it. In his house and here in Marburg I have been with him for days on end without his once breaking, by a lighter conversation of any length, his preoccupation with higher things. One saw in this how deeply these matters had taken

hold of him. But seldom did he utter a weak or sentimental word. Sharply and exactly he spoke of what moved his heart. In his case this is to be explained not only from the fact that the more easily strong-willed and truth-loving men become sentimental, the more careful are they to keep watch over the tendency to express their emotion. Ritschl would rather protest against a conduct which seemed to him to be all too prevalent in the evangelical church of our day. There are people endowed with a wonderful facility in religious intercourse. Towards the gift of such people Ritschl was in the highest degree susceptible. The picture of one of the most powerful of these richly-talented persons [1] he had daily before his eyes in his study. He lived in the idea that the pure expression of religious emotion and its

[1 Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769), a hymn-writer of the school of Neander, a leader in revivals, a mystic and ascetic; he had a powerful influence in and around Mülheim. One of his hymns is familiar to us in J. Wesley's translation, which begins, "Thou hidden love of God, whose height."]

life-kindling activity is the weightiest thing that can come into existence in the world, and forms the proper distinguishing mark in history. All the more painful did he feel it when religious talk, which ventured to touch what is highest, struck him as artificial. He treated the professionals in this sphere as his deadly enemies. They have paid him back richly in kind.

*Ritschl saw that the root of the evil was a false idea of faith.*

Ritschl not only treated this evil habit in individual instances as a profanation of the holiest, but he aimed also at getting at its cause and rooting it out altogether. The root of religious affectation and, in general, of all manufactured Christianity is the false idea of faith, which Ritschl confronted with Luther's weapons. And this idea of faith is not only fostered by despisers of Christianity as their ground for turning from it, but also prevails in wide circles of the Church, including her theologians.

*It is a common idea that faith is an acknowledgment of the whole Bible as God's Word and true; coupled with a firm trust in its narratives and doctrines.*

From thousands who call themselves Protestant Christians one may hear this answer to the question, "What is faith?" "Faith consists of two parts, acknowledgment that all that we read in the Bible is God's Word and therefore true; and at the same time a firm trust in what is taught and narrated in the Bible." It is our conviction that this representation of faith would certainly not have won so large a place in the Protestant Church if it had not contained an element of truth. And it is just through the fact that this idea has so long ruled in the Protestant Church, that one can realise how slowly great historical events like Luther's Reformation run their course. For the faith which is described in these words is really Roman Catholic faith. This is one of the strongest proofs of how closely we are still connected

with the Church from which we separated in the sixteenth century. We have indeed often heard that Protestants only believe what stands in the Bible, while Catholics believe also what their Church teaches. Just in this common way of distinguishing the difference is it evident that we are right in our assertion. One who so speaks of the two Churches shows that he finds the difference to lie simply in the amount of what is believed. Faith itself he holds to be the same in both. Multitudes both of opponents and adherents of Christianity find themselves at one in the idea that our faith consists in holding for true doctrines and narratives offered us with divine authority, and thenceforth depending upon them. But if there were really no other kind of faith in Christendom there would be no Protestant Christianity. We should only be distinguished from Roman Catholics as the half is distinguished from the whole. For anyone who remains at the standpoint of this conception of faith stops half-way when he is ready to

believe all the Bible says but denies belief to the claims of the Church. For in point of fact we have received the Bible through the Church which in the first century of its history accepted these writings as canonical. Thus the Christian who understands by faith simply a ready acceptance of things offered with divine authority undoubtedly remains half-way when he declares he will accept only that Word of God which is offered to him in the Bible. If he wants to be in earnest he must rather submit first of all to that authority from which we have received the Bible, namely, the Church. What is affirmed in the Catholic Church would accordingly appear to be the case, that it is simply due to weakness of character that believing Protestants do not become Catholics.

*It is necessary to distinguish the essentially differing ideas of faith in Catholics and Protestants.*

But things are not indeed so bad. In restrict-

ing themselves to the Bible, Protestants are quite right. This true fundamental principle, however, cannot be properly followed out if in conjunction with it the Catholic idea of faith is adhered to. There is, however, another idea of faith which we distinguish from the Roman Catholic as the Christian: that idea of faith for which Paul contended, and, after him, Luther. It would be unsuitable for me to quote in this place the scornful words which Luther has often heaped upon the thought that faith is the ready acceptance of what is written in the Bible, an acceptance which one must set before himself and to which he must compel himself. But I do remind you of these words in order to strengthen the assertion that the seed sown at the Reformation is even yet far from ripe, in days when the Catholic idea of faith against which Luther contended is still a power in the Protestant Church. Many who have a share in the leading of the Church and in its theological work let their hands be tied by

this power, because they fear to be reproached as unbelievers, that is to say, because they do not fear God alone, but fear men too, and that very greatly.

*In the Catholic Church a true notion of what faith is, is not of such critical importance as in the Protestant Church.*

In the Catholic Church the persistence of the false idea of faith has perhaps fewer evil consequences than among us. For the Catholic Church has within its complicated edifice counteracting influences. Luther, on the other hand, destroyed just these counter-vailing elements, and had to do so in order to open the way for the proper idea of faith. Such influences are, perhaps, mysticism and the Catholic doctrine of good works, and that materialising of the divine in its cultus which often sends such a strange thrill through us Protestants. The Catholic Church avails itself of these elements with the result of assisting its Christianity. But in the Protes-

tant Church, on the other hand, owing to the indelible memory of what Luther did, these means of help and completion cannot come much into force, although, in secret, they may in many ways be turned to service. On our theory faith is to do everything. Faith saves. We hold firmly to this, or rather, we are not drifting away from this. But as long as the Catholic idea of faith, to which so strong a promise can by no means be attached, is at the same time retained, it is easy to fall into a caricature of religious conduct which is too far contradictory to truth for one to be really in earnest about it.

*Confusion results when Protestants cling to the Catholic notion of faith.*

Faith justifies, that is, delivers and saves. What becomes of this Pauline proposition, if we graft into it that Catholic idea of faith which is also common among ourselves? A person is saved by agreeing to all that is offered him as the Word of God by those

authorities on faith, the Church or the Bible. It would be too strong to say that this faith consists in affirming something against which the person inwardly protests. But in any case this faith is the endeavour to hold the truth of what is not understood to be true. And is such an effort, and such a painful situation, to save a man? Certainly and evidently it can not. Nevertheless the proposition that faith saves is rightly maintained in the Protestant Church. Under those conditions, however, it necessarily acquires the following meaning. The Christian who honestly tries to hold for true what he cannot grasp as true, says to himself, "God will one day reward me for this deed and at last save me." Reason and unreason, truth and falsehood, are so entangled in the human soul that it would be presumptuous to attack with hard words this religious attitude, which meets us at every step in the Christian Church. It is very possible for a Christian to know and share the proper religious attitude, the faith

which really saves, and yet at the same time, from habit, to share that false conception of faith without noticing that he himself has outgrown it. That may be true of Catholics as well as of Protestants. But we must speak more harshly to those who are called to serve the Church as theologians. It is our duty to leave no doubt that such a faith must work to the injury of the Protestant Church, and to do our best for its removal.

*In earlier times the incomprehensible was not the stumbling-block it is to the modern doubter.*

In the first place, a wall is raised that shuts many in our time out of Christianity, if they are told that in order to become Christians they must hold for true this or that doctrine because it is announced to them as God's Word, although it may be by no means clear to them. A man who knows the duty of truthfulness cannot accomplish this sort of thing without injuring his conscience. If

anyone becomes a Christian it is certainly not in consequence of this demand but in spite of it. And if anyone, repulsed by such a requisition, keeps at a distance from the preaching of Christ, it is not always his fault; the fault lies often also on those who laid on him such an inhuman burden. There certainly was a time when there was a meaning in asking of everyone, without further ado, to hold for true whatever a Christian ought to believe. In the Middle Ages it was possible so to act. For in those days the common picture of the world in which people lived was such that Christianity, as it was then understood, fitted into it without any trouble. We live in another age, in another world. In this world Christianity is a stranger. The man who grows up in the midst of modern civilisation is trained from his youth up in ideas of another sort, with which the ideas of the Christian faith by no means connect themselves as like in kind. No care of Christian parents can preserve a child of our time from this.

Modern society can command the means of living only by having a better mastery of Nature than men of the Middle Ages had. If we carried on industry on the methods then in use we should starve. And the modern forms of industry rest on the belief that the things we have to use are united and bound together with all other real things in a natural order. And so everyone who in the world of to-day works for a living, carries this belief about with him. But it is evidently not easily possible for one whose life is conditioned by the thought of an all-pervading law governing all phenomena, to appropriate and maintain even the commonest fundamental ideas of Christianity as things of the accustomed sort. There are few Christians of our time who have not in some way or another experienced the pain and the strain of the contradiction between the thought of a God who works miracles and hears prayers, and the thought of an infinite world ruled by law. Christian faith has indeed in the idea of

the almightiness of the supernatural God a means of getting beyond this contradiction. But no science can lay the foundation for this thought. It arises first in faith and is affirmed in the strength of faith. Thus for our generation the thoughts of faith must lose more and more the appearance of being natural. But this is no defect. For in religion it is never the self-evident that helps, but the miraculous. In the Middle Ages, when the most important ideas of Christianity for practical life had become quite customary and the object of a supposed scientific proof, they became no longer miraculous but profane; and so the unsatisfied religious need sought in other spheres for the miraculous by which faith lives. Is it really better that men should have to look for miracles in the Holy Blood at Wilsnack[1] and the like, or that we to-day

[1] Wilsnack, near Potsdam. Spots of blood were said to have appeared on three consecrated wafers at Wilsnack in 1383. The alleged miracle soon gave rise to wide controversy. Pilgrimages began to be made thither, but were forbidden in 1405. In 1412 the Magdeburg Synod

should be compelled by the irresistible divinely-guided course of history to find our miracles in God Himself and the certainty of His power and grace? In any case there is no longer any meaning in simply demanding that men of our day should hold for true the thoughts of the Christian faith. That imposes quite another burden than that which those of the Middle Ages had to carry by reason of the same demand; and the more sincere a man is, the more impossible is it thus made for him to become Christian.

*We are oppressed by the demand that we are to appropriate forthwith all the ideas contained in Scripture.*

Not less is the harm which this false idea of faith brings to those who count themselves Christian and want to be believers. Christians are indeed utterly deluded if they hold them-

declared the whole thing a fraud. In 1453 Pope Nicholas V. declared his belief in it. The first Protestant minister of the town burnt the three wafers in 1552.]

selves called and bound to appropriate and repeat with firm resolution as their own opinions all that such a man as Paul has said. Such a decision can only make us inwardly unhappy. The mental equipment of a Paul does not by a long way fit us just because we make so bold as to slip ourselves into it. It is always a grave error, even if one very easily committed, to suppose that we Christians are ordained by God to live as spiritual parasites on the thoughts of others. Of course it is true in every kind of education that the thoughts of those who have gone before are a source of strength to those who follow. And we should be the last to say that we can be Christians at all if the wonderful thoughts of the Bible do not go to our very heart. Christian faith is impossible without a reverent attitude to a sacred tradition. We know well that right living would cease with the connection between us and this tradition. But we certainly do not come into the right, living connection with it by making up our

minds to appropriate its thoughts and then giving them out as our own. We are to be no parasites; we must live by our own faith. How Luther wearied himself to make this clear! From the wide diffusion of this error there has grown up in our Church what Ritschl contended against as religious professionalism. If a man talks himself or others into the idea that he moves in a region of thought up to the level of which as a matter of fact he has not yet grown, there must arise a cramped unnaturalness. What was, in the case of the prophets, the simple and natural expression of a God-awakened life, is then necessarily made the object of an artistic technique. It is, of course, true that the Christian must preach to his congregation, not himself, but the Word of God. But a man can preach as the Word of God only what he has himself understood as the Word of God.

*And the effort to do so leads to professionalism.*

The preaching of a Christian who really

is on the same track as the prophets may be easily distinguished from the discourse of the mere professional. The latter will always have a copious flow of such words as lend themselves to the expression of the sublimest ideas of the faith or the most vehement religious excitement. But it is otherwise with the utterance of the real man of faith. In it we find before all else a living comprehension and exposition of some particular set of facts in which speaker and hearer find common ground. So to set forth these particular circumstances, and so to make them understood that they shall reach our hearts with the power of divine requirement and divine promise—that is the work of a true Christian discourse. A word can have for men the significance of a word of God only when it brings him to true self-examination under the circumstances in which he stands at the moment. Every religious thought which does not become intelligible to us in this way remains foreign to us, though we may give it out ever so defiantly as the

expression of our own convictions and excite our imagination ever so strongly with it. And when so many in our Church reproduce with astonishing facility the sublimest results of religious reflection, regardless of the only way in which such thoughts can arise in a soul and become its own property, such preachers are injuring themselves and helping nobody.

*Yet Ritschl does insist that Faith is submission to an authoritative Revelation.*

To guard against the harm thus done Ritschl brings into line a proper understanding of faith. Connected with this is the fact that the leaders of what is known as the liberal school in theology have also vehemently opposed him. These theologians are, of course, through the influence of Schleiermacher, forced to feel strongly along with Ritschl the first evil pointed out above, namely, the reduction of faith to the level of a human act that goes against the conscience. But what they wish to put in the place of this false faith is not

Christian faith, but a religiousness which, in their view, is rooted in the nature of the human soul. They do not understand that Christian faith is unconditional submission to a Power which a Christian distinguishes from his own inner life—that is, to the Revelation of God. Of the two propositions—Faith saves a man, and, Faith is a submission to the authority of a revelation—they are willing to hold only the former. Ritschl maintained both. That made him incomprehensible to most of his contemporaries; but it also puts him in the front rank of those who have wanted to rescue and preserve the work of Luther from forms that are falling to pieces. His opponents busy themselves with attacks on his theological system and are delighted when they expose mistakes in it, as if it were not self-evident that such a system must offer to the view of other Christians much that is incomplete and contradictory. As imperfect Christians we must have imperfect systems. But, on the other hand, what is really great and imperishable in

Ritschl, namely, the strong internal connection of both of these fundamental propositions in his theology, works silently and irresistibly even on those who abuse him.

*Faith involves a special experience of God.*

Faith saves—that is, faith of itself places the person in whom it arises in a condition which is the beginning of the blessed life. The faith which accomplishes this is not a ready acceptance of the thoughts and words of others; still less does it consist in a rigid adherence to these. The longing of our souls after true life will not be stilled by receiving a doctrine about God, but only by finding God Himself, God Himself—that is, something else than the world in which we lose ourselves, something else, too, than the Eternal Cause of this world, a Being who lets us men of time have experience of eternal life. But eternal life is life in that which is eternal, and life in that which is eternal, so far as we can comprehend and experience it, consists in two inward feel-

1. ings: first, that we can make an occasion of inward joy, not only particular temporal things such as good health in our children, or having an honest daily calling, but also all that makes in any way a conscious element in our exist-
2. ence; secondly, that we willingly, from our hearts, bow before that Eternal whose claim we feel in the moral imperative, that Eternal which imposes on us the task of self-denial. Evidently the man who can feel both these things is inwardly cut free from the world and brought into a life in that which is eternal. The Power, contact with which makes us so rich and strong, is our God. A person who has not somehow experienced this has no knowledge of God, no faith, and, in the Christian sense, no God.

*To find God is to be able to point to a specific instance in my life in which God sought and touched me.*

But what is it to find this God? We have not found Him when we conceive a Power

such as we have just described as the very essence of God Himself. The bare thought of God helps us, as Luther says, just as little as a monk's cowl. A man can only say he has found God when it has become clear to him from some event in his own life to which he can assign a definite date that God has therein sought him out and touched him. This is the regular order of all living piety in all religions. There is therefore no religious thought which does not express this direct relation of God to the particular man who cherishes the thought. We do not possess, for example, the religious idea of the almightiness of God when we imagine a Power who can perform all possibilities. For we have faith's idea of the almightiness of God only when we conceive a Power *which at this particular moment is for our sake causing the whole reality in which we stand.* Many count it a scientifically demonstrable truth that God exists as the Almighty Lord of all things. Still more prevalent with us is the thought

that a man comes by the idea of morality to a certainty of God; that one who is wholly penetrated by the conviction of the rights belonging to the good, will necessarily conceive of the good as the Power to which all is finally subjugated. It is often said that our moral energy is asleep in us as soon as we are willing to let slip the thought that God really exists as the Almighty Will of the good. That is quite right; and a Christian will be the last to wish to dispute it. Yet the Christian faith in God and that moral enthusiasm which begins and ends in the thought of God are far from being identical. The thought that the good alone has power and gives life, by no means saves a man. Nay, the more sincerely earnest he is in his moral sentiments, the more will this thought consume him like a fire. For what is not good has then no share in true life. And who is good? Faith in moral enthusiasm makes human life a tragedy. That is indeed something, but it is not Christianity. Christian

faith saves the man in whom moral enthusiasm has ended in dismay. How, then, does this come about?

*The beginning of faith is a hopeful recognition that human history contains Jesus Christ.*

We enjoy the company of men in whom we think we see a sincere prostration before the Eternal. And we are not drawn to them merely because they alone inspire trust. However woebegone and needy souls they may be in other respects, yet they act on us as a source of cheer because they look out on us from the depths of a deeply hidden joy. We say to ourselves: "Such a man could not keep always calm in surrender to necessity and always deny himself for the sake of the good if he did not feel himself secure in an unassailable possession." This is just the very secret of Christianity, that it puts into human life something which begins by making the richest or the poorest person so rich that he can influence others with the strength of real

love. Being a Christian consists above all in this, in gaining this inner wealth. What makes our souls rich, however, does not spring up of itself in the soul, but reaches us through our historical position. Not to despair of oneself because Jesus Christ is a real constituent of this our world—that is the beginning of Christian faith. To understand that, one must be able to see the peculiarity of Jesus which lifts Him sheer above all else that meets us in the world.

*Our estimates of people help to form our moral ideal; Jesus alone rises above it.*

We understand people by estimating their moral value. The moral imperative is the key to their inner life. In trustworthy people we find not only that they endure the test of the requirements of morality; we always feel, besides, that they advance us in the comprehension of that by which we measure them. They enrich us as we try to estimate and understand them. On the other hand, the

moral ideal which we learn to know through them brings us to a sharper perception of what is distorted in them. Thus they themselves take care that the ideal we thought we saw in them shall always grow to something higher than they are. If it were exactly the same for us with the Person of Jesus there would be no Christianity in the world. Certainly we draw near Him only if we put this great question regarding Him to our conscience and measure Him by the moral imperative. But the nearer we come to Him, the more does He become the instructor of our conscience. What the meaning of a moral command is, what good is, what moral power and completeness are, we feel that we see for the first time when our eyes open to see Him. That rock-firm will which we look for in those to whom we are willing to extend our confidence is visible to us in His perfect freedom from the fear of men and His spiritual freedom from the fear of death. The fulness of spiritual life for which our soul longs,

appears to us in the way in which He loves and hates. He loves those who need Him, and hates those who oppress these needy ones and lead them to destruction. The moral ideal does not rise above Him; for He makes it visible to us as something inexhaustible which lays hold of our hearts and minds, and He makes us feel most deeply how far we ourselves are from it. It is simply a fact that the appearance of Jesus recorded in the New Testament works upon us in this way. One who wants to controvert Christianity must explain away first of all this fact that multitudes are thus laid hold of by Jesus.

*Faith begins when a man shares Jesus' own confidence in His power to save.*

But the foundations of faith are not yet laid simply by the fact that the historical appearance of Jesus so affects us. There must be added the fact that the same Man who becomes judge and conscience to the person who comes face to face with Him, interests

Himself in him with a patient and unparalleled love. At the same time that He makes the sinner insecure by the simple power of His personal life He sets him on his feet by His kindness. Therefore those who have been led by Him to feel the bitterness of their plight, yet felt themselves for that very reason drawn to Him. It was thus that He once forgave sinners. He before whose eyes is unfolded the vast misery of mankind, their profound lovelessness and their weakness of will, has yet the calm trust that He can snatch them from the hell which in their own souls they have prepared for themselves, whether for the present or for the future. On the eve of a cruel death, in the midst of the visible failure of His work, His moral sensitiveness did not hinder Him from speaking those words which hand on through history His confidence in His own power and the meaning of His life. In these words He says that by looking back at His Personality all men after Him can be freed from their inward

dispeace and from the burden of their sin. Thus is it that He provides the forgiveness of sins now and for all time for all who look to Him, who feel His earnestness and goodness, and are so overpowered by His confidence in Himself.

*This faith makes God so real that it issues in obedience to the revelation and consequent inward peace.*

When all this forms part of the impression which Jesus makes upon us, our faith is beginning. For a man understands that experience of the Person of Jesus if it comes upon him as the unmistakable touch of a supernatural Power full of love and truth. Whatever he may have heard before about God in other ways, he will now for the first time know that he has found God Himself. For now he not only cherishes thoughts about God which others have handed down to him or which he himself has excogitated; he lives in the midst of an experience in which he traces

God working upon him. In what he experiences of the Person of Jesus the Christian becomes certain that the Power of the good not only judges but redeems him. Thus Christian faith is created. It is simply the trust that Jesus wins from us by His personal life, and the ensuing joyful submission to the God who manifests Himself in Him and works upon us through Him. Such a faith in itself saves. It lays no burden on conscientious minds, for it does not ask us to hold for true something which remains incomprehensible. It is never a laborious work of our own, but, like all trusting, it is an experience of the effect another produces upon us. This genuine Christian faith is certainly not easier than the false faith which will hold for true every imaginable thing because the Bible or the Church says it. For we never come to an end of acquiring it. It arises in us when the good, as a power directed on us and saving us, becomes through Jesus Christ an undeniable fact of our own life. Such a

faith saves a man as nothing in the world can but the fact that he has found God. Thus in genuine Christian faith both these elements are united, submission to the authority of a revelation—which is the only thing that can demand unconditional obedience, because it is the secret power of the good will—and blessedness, the unquenchable emotion of deepest joy, which never suffers the Christian to be crushed under the burden of life. As we sing the hymn, "A safe stronghold our God is still," we do not mean that we will defiantly hold to our conviction and not allow ourselves to be stricken down although honour, wife, and children be taken from us; but we mean that even in dark and terrible experiences there is present with us an eternally-abiding happiness, the gift of God in Jesus Christ. It creates for us an unassailable realm of inward peace.

*Faith does not involve the intellectual appropriation of every idea in the Bible.*

One who has come so far is no longer able

to look with indifference on the Bible as an ordinary object of historical research. For he certainly hears in it the Word of God to humanity, a recapitulation of things history has produced and which no advance of history can render out of date. But he is certainly also far from the presumption of holding everything for true that stands in the Bible. He will indeed notice that through his faith he is now for the first time brought into a state of mind which can rightly understand the Prophets and Apostles. But he knows, too, that there is much in the Bible for which his understanding is not yet ripe. God will help us yet further. But, of course, we can grow in knowledge only if we exercise in secret the faith God has given us through Christ. A person truly awakened to faith hears quite calmly that much stands in the Bible which never can and was never meant to become part of our own intellectual property; for example, the whole ancient theory of nature and the traces of rabbinical theology and

Jewish eschatology in the New Testament. When a truly earnest faith sure of its ground freely acknowledges this—Luther, again, is an illuminating example—it will give free scope to that historical inquiry about the Bible which is the scientific task of theology. A faith, on the other hand, which withholds that acknowledgment enters necessarily into an alliance with insincerity, and must, for punishment, stand in fear of the facts.

*The Church must take officially the same attitude to Scripture as each individual.*

In the manner we have just described every man who is really living a Christian life in the Protestant Church secretly holds the faith. But shall this root-principle of the Reformation be the standard for each individual's inner life and yet not for the life of the Church? For against what we have just said about the Bible this objection is raised, "How shall the Protestant Church continue to exist if it does not obey the Bible as the Word of God?

And how can the Church be governed if this obedience is not to be demanded and assumed?" While the faith which saves is what we have described, yet the faith which makes possible the existence and government of the Church seems to be the rendering of that obedience. Nevertheless I hold that this distinction is not right. For if it is followed, then in Church government, and especially in the ministry, the standpoint of faith is surrendered out of practical considerations in themselves quite proper. No one has a right to prescribe as necessary for the Protestant Church anything which neither serves to awaken and maintain faith, nor is itself the fruit of faith. This must not be forgotten when, for the sake of the Church, one urges obedience to the Bible as God's Word. One fundamental proposition about the Bible which is the simple result of faith does indeed hold good for the Protestant Church. It is this. Every man for whom Jesus Christ has become the Word of the

Invisible God to himself stands with reverence before the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. These make up the only traditions in which, for us, Christ is to be found. Therefore the knowledge of these books is a means of coming nearer Him and of creating for us a richer picture of that which inspires us with the true courage to live. We would therefore hear no preaching but that which expounds to us the Word of God out of the Holy Scriptures. For every one who has won this inward position the Bible must have an inexhaustible content. For every one who has learnt to bow himself to God there belongs to God alone a commanding authority to which he yields his whole self captive. Thus not every word of Scripture has that authority, but only those words in which, by the power of his faith, he already understands God speaking to him. The extent of such an understanding of Scripture may be small or great; life does not depend on that. The vital question is decided by this alone, "Have

we faith, and do we practise that faith in our life?" But if our knowledge of Scripture remains stationary and we become indifferent to the Bible, we may well take from this a warning that we are beginning to wither away.

*True faith determines the proper attitude to Scripture, both for the Church and for individuals.*

This is the position with regard to the Bible which, as a necessary and fundamental proposition, really results from faith. Doubtless something else is, as a rule, desired for the sake of the Church. It is demanded of members of the Protestant Church that they should straightway declare that they hold for true all that is taught or narrated in the Bible, although it is certain that in many instances the real meaning has by no means shone out clear to them. Their intelligence has this extraordinary demand made upon it owing to a practical necessity of Church order! If, for example, it is thought necessary to *prove* to

people a short system of doctrine such as has been developed in the Church, in most cases there is nothing for it but to refer back to an "It is written" and then say the proof is complete. Now it is a question if anything of that sort is necessary. Certainly theology ought to sum up as simply as possible the Christian knowledge inherited from the Fathers and offer it to the Church. But we should not do this with the claim that we will *prove* it, or with the demand that everyone shall, by a stormy mental decision, make it his own. We should rather put it forward as the expression of the inner world in which believers have lived, and tell Christians that they, too, will some day grow up to the comprehension of such things if only each in his own special situation exercises a right faith; and this right faith is something quite different from an assent resulting from a decision of the human mind. In religion there prevails reverence for what is secret. For even when God reveals Himself He still dwells in the thick

darkness. So such reverence is natural and a matter of course to the faith really awakened by Him. On the other hand, nothing is more like unbelief than the presumptuous dexterity which appropriates outwardly what can be revealed to faith alone. Faith knows how it grows in knowledge. Faith goes miraculously forward "from vision to vision." Faith cannot be manufactured. Perhaps it would be in harmony with this characteristic if the Church in its practice were to revive what the ancient Church seems to have thought it possessed in its *disciplina arcana*.[1] The true *disciplina arcana* for the Protestant Church would consist, first, in limiting the word 'faith' to that inner communion with God to which He Himself raises us; and, second, in setting forth

[1 "Disciplina arcana." In imitation of the heathen and Greek 'mysteries,' the early Church in the third, fourth and fifth centuries attempted to make a practice of keeping secret certain rites, *e.g.*, the Lord's Supper, Baptism, extreme unction, and certain forms of words, *e.g.*, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer. These were not to be revealed to unbelievers or spoken about in their presence. The practice died out in the sixth century.]

the miraculous world of Christian knowledge, not before the unbeliever as something which he can take by force, but before the believer as a goal to which God will conduct the man who lives in the exercise of faith.

*In the Bible only the parts we understand are for us in the meantime words of God.*

Many doughty churchmen will of course be of opinion that this is going far too slowly. Certainly it is slow, like all healthy growth. But it results in fruit. On the other hand, only harm can come from making it a Christian duty to count things among our inner possessions which in truth we do not understand. In the case of those who with any earnestness embark on such a course nothing can result but the satisfaction of their own vanity, and a thoroughly false kind of worship. They want to submit to God's Word, but they forget that they cannot use God and His Word as they would men and human precepts. God asks for the heart. How

shall I with a free heart submit to ideas about which I have not yet arrived at any certainty that my faith, in virtue of which I am in real submission to God, can move in their atmosphere free and untrammelled? If I insist on undertaking this, I take up the same attitude to God and His Word as to human precepts. It is possible, of course, to follow the latter outwardly. What I call God's Word would then in truth have for me the character of a human precept oppressing the conscience just like the burdens which Luther threw off. This simple consideration ought to keep us from demanding for the Church's sake of one who would be a Christian immediate unquestioning assent to the words of Scripture. In such a way what ought gradually to become the Word of God to the Christian through his growth in faith is turned into something to be outwardly and worthlessly obeyed, and is thus treated as an arbitrary precept. But no one has a right to lay a yoke like this on the necks of disciples.

*The Church must distinguish the faith responsive to God's revelation from an assent to doctrines.*

For the life of the Church something quite different is to be demanded, something, too, which is being striven for by all faithful servants of the Church, to whatever ecclesiastical or dogmatic party they otherwise belong. The people must be ever taught afresh what faith is—how it arises, what sort of wealth it brings, what sort of duties it imposes. This alone is faith, that we become conscious of God's reality and of His grace working upon us in the fact that Jesus Christ is present to us in a simple human manifestation which can be understood by every man who is morally astir. The wealth of this faith is that it is continually making us new men in that it—that is, the nearness of God experienced therein—gives us power to conquer, and to be at home in the unseen. This faith fulfils its duty and becomes obedience when it uses this wealth in every situation of life, and subjects itself ever

anew to God and His truth. In many Protestant Churches it is in this way that the people are told of faith, not only in general terms, but also with loving penetration into special circumstances. But there is evidently also mistaken teaching about faith current among us, when so many people measure the Christian worth of a man by his agreement with this or that sum of apostolic doctrine which they hold to be exactly what is necessary. Such agreement is not the chief thing. The chief thing is faith, which makes us for the first time ready to assent to Christian teaching and to grow, be it rapidly or slowly, in knowledge. And though a Christian of to-day has as little apostolic knowledge as even Justin Martyr, if he only knows that through Jesus Christ he is brought face to face with God, he has in the main just what the great apostles had. So the Protestant Church should secure with iron hand that no one opens his mouth to preach the Gospel to a congregation unless he has shown that he can distinguish the faith which is the redeeming

gift of God from the worthless assent to uncomprehended doctrine. That would be in the Protestant sense true faithfulness to the Confession. For no one will dispute that on this distinction, and on the position which lies at its foundation, the work of the Reformation stands or falls.

*We can compel attention to Jesus Christ as the basis of a theory of the universe, but we cannot compel faith.*

Founding on Holy Scripture Luther has made clear the faith we have described as the spiritual experience in which, according to God's ordinance, a person is made humble yet strong, conscious of his misery, yet saved. Ritschl has carried forward this work of Luther. And seeing that we, his pupils, follow him in this matter, we do not yield ourselves to the delusion that because we are members of a university we must make it our business to establish this faith by scientific means. That is impossible, just as it is always im-

possible to bring anyone by proof to surrender himself to the impression made by a person and trust him. To begin with, we can only turn to those who are conditioned by the same historical point of view as we ourselves, and are thus ready for a Christian theory of the universe, for Christian judging and acting. Nevertheless I should count it an error if theology were on this account to be banished from the universities. Whoever is not entirely buried in elementary scientific work is compelled to range himself in history on the side of some particular theory of the universe. Everyone especially is compelled to do so who is supposed to investigate and picture historical events. A person completely indifferent in this respect could perhaps write a history of clothes, but certainly not a history of people. But every other student, too, unless he is willing to become great as a student but perish as a man, will develop within himself, as his personality grows ripe and full of character, a theory of the universe for

which he has no convincing scientific proof, but for which nevertheless he stakes his character. What is often charged against us as a special sign of our unscientific method is encountered in everybody in this connection. Will one, then, say to us that the historic Christ, who is for us the motive and ground of that faith in God which is our theory of the universe, is not such a firmly defined indubitable quantity as to be able to serve in this way? There are lives of Jesus by Strauss and Renan, by Beyschlag and by Weiss. Which gives us the historic Christ? We answer, "No one of them." It is altogether a mistake to desire a ground for a religious theory of the universe which will work with absolute certainty. He who wants this goes into the Catholic Church. There only is that ostensibly to be found. Yet our appeal to the historic Christ is right. This, of course, does not mean that we can demonstrate the Christ who is the ground of our faith to everyone as an indubitable fact, as we could the

fact, say, that a town already existed in this place in Luther's day. But in this we mean to say that in every man the necessary conditions exist for his finding in the tradition about Jesus in the books of the New Testament, the picture of a Man who by the power of His personal life holds us suspended over the abyss. We will compel no one to find a Redeemer in Jesus. But something similar is to be observed in every other theory of the universe as well. For example, one who subscribes to the naturalistic theory certainly finds in Natural Law a mysterious Power, not felt by us in the same way, but satisfying his mind. He is obviously biassed by his principles towards rating personal life lower than natural life, although he is obliged as occasion arises to renounce this standpoint, if he does not want to behave with inhumanity. But against the ideas and findings of this naturalistic theory of the universe every one will shut his mind who does not like to forget, in his concern with what is, the things that ought to be.

*The study of Christianity is justified by its influence on character.*

Thus all religions are alike in their inability to compel anyone by scientific proof to take up their standpoint. If the universities were willing to have no theology but one which aimed at exercising this compulsion on behalf of Christianity, we would have no place here. For we cannot make this our aim. But I think that even those among us who are not willing to be Christians, will yet, as men of character, agree with us that nothing in the world is so well worth consideration as the thoughts in which a character unfolds itself while seeking an answer to the question of the meaning and the aim of life—that is to say, while seeking a theory of the universe, a thing which always expresses some sort of religion. And the fact that in German universities the prominent subject of their research is Christianity and not Islam, is sufficiently explained by the fact that most Germans wish to be, not Mohammedans, but Christians.

# THE MORAL LAW

## As understood in Romanism and in Protestantism

# Introduction by the Translator

THIS work was originally an address delivered at the Saxon Church Conference meeting at Chemnitz in 1899.[1] Though its form is controversial, it is not really a polemic against Rome so much as a word in season to Protestants. It seems to present a large part of Professor Herrmann's message to his time. He seeks here to arrive at some fundamental truths about morality by a study of two opposite conceptions of the moral law entertained in Romanism and by Protestants.

To arrive at the distinction between Romanist and Protestant ethics our author starts from the contrast between the two conceptions of faith. Rome requires for faith a passive condition of mind, receptive of ideas

[1 The German title is *Römische und Evangelische Sittlichkeit.*]

which the mind does not itself assist in producing, but which are merely imposed on it from without by authority. With Protestants the believing mind is active. Its beliefs are the product of an activity of the soul aroused by contact with the personal Christ who is the object of faith. Here doctrines are no longer imposed from without and accepted on authority alone.

A parallel contrast is found between the two systems of ethics. For Romanists the moral law is a formula imposed from without only. When a man's action conforms to the words of that prescribed rule he is moral. Protestantism sees that outward acts are insufficient of themselves to constitute morality. They are indications of the all-important state of mind or inward disposition lying behind them. The law is to be written on the heart. For that inward vision of right presents itself to our consciousness, not as a rule imposed by an outside authority but as the product of an inward activity of our own soul aroused by

contact with the personal Christ who is the object of faith. But Protestants too often fail to apprehend their own principles.

Students of Pauline theology will not miss the close parallel here with the Pauline antithesis between law and grace. The apostle's doctrine, which seemed so revolutionary that it cost him his life, was that no law, not even that delivered on Sinai, could give satisfactory results. The Spirit—that divine gift of an instinct for goodness in tune with Christ's—raises a man to a plane above both state law (Rom xiii. 7 f.; *cf.* 1 Peter ii. 16 f.) and Mosaic law (Gal. v. 14–18), and consequently above the law even of natural conscience which takes the place of Mosaic law for those outside Hebrew revelation (Rom. ii. 14–15). At the same time law had a use as a treasury of first principles corrective of fanaticism (1 Cor. ix. 9, 13; 1 Tim. i. 8; 2 Tim. iii. 16).

The proof that Protestant morality is right in this, and Rome's morality wrong, is found by Professor Herrman in two directions:

(1) in the moral debasement flowing from Rome's theory and found in her doctrine of 'equivocations' and in her theory of 'probabilism'; (2) in the teaching of Jesus Christ, whose aim always was to make good actions spring, not from submission to an external rule, but from an independent moral judgment in His disciples.

That Professor Herrmann's view is that of the great Reformers seems undeniable. But it is probable that the complaint is as true of the Christianity of this country as of that of Germany, that the jubilant note of sixteenth-century ethics—or rather of first-century ethics—has in some quarters died away, that the immemorial custom of centuries has been reasserting itself, and that the lazy habit is being re-established in pulpit and pew alike of doing what we are told instead of forming a mind of our own through Christ and His Spirit.

The appeal to authority on lines distinctively Roman Catholic is made in a recent manifesto by Lord Halifax. "The only remedy is a

frank acceptance all round of that principle of authority in matters of faith and practice which distinguishes the Church from the Sects" (*Nineteenth Century* for April 1903, p. 547).

Perhaps a word should be added as to Professor Herrmann's attitude to modern historical criticism. It has sometimes been suggested, especially when criticism seemed unusually destructive, that faith has to do, not with the historical Jesus, whose personality may any day be shattered by the critics, but with the ideas associated with His name, that in fact the doctrines matter, not the person. Professor Herrmann would say it is the Christ as a living person that matters. That life of His is an essential part of the 'reality' in which we find God. It is His life that brings God near to us and enables us to realise Him. We dare not try to silence criticism; but if any critics were to tell us Jesus was only a portrait painted by men to set forth the ideal their own souls yearned after, we should not believe them. We are sure of Christ. His is a real

life in which God not only once worked, but in which He still reveals Himself to *us*.

The appendix was published this year. It grew out of a small reply to Rev. Joseph Adloff, appended to the second German edition. It has become a new and fuller treatment of many themes involved in the controversy, such as the relation of the Christian to authority, to tradition, and to Scripture, the Kantian doctrine of autonomy, the ultimate basis of the duty of speaking the truth, the Thomist doctrine of ethics, etc. Consequently it has been included as presenting many interesting aspects of our author's teaching.

To British readers German thought often seems involved only because its modes of connection are different from our own own. The translators have therefore taken the liberty of adding headings to the author's paragraphs to indicate the turns of the argument.

Notes added by the translator are distinguished by being enclosed in square brackets.

D. M.

PUTNEY, *September* 1903.

# Preface to the Third German Edition

The second edition of this pamphlet was sent out with the words: "It is not to be expected that Catholic Theology will seriously controvert the views here worked out." To my delight a distinguished German theologian in the Church of Rome has after all attempted to make a serious reply. Joseph Mausbach's utterances were very welcome. He feels himself very safe in attacking me, because he thinks he can trace my demonstration of the corruption of morality by his Church to a misunderstanding. But the way in which he makes out this misunderstanding is exceedingly interesting. For it shows with special distinctness the lack of clearness of moral

vision to which the Church of Rome is held. Against the characteristics of Romanist ethics which I had shown to exist in probabilism Mausbach tries to set up another which he says has its foundations in the maxims of Thomist ethics. In doing this he makes it evident that he is in a hard case with respect to probabilism. He wants to defend it; in view of the well-known decisions of Rome that of course is not to be avoided. But yet he is not so hardened as to be able to defend the worst elements of it. So he manages by saying nothing about it, emphasising all the more vehemently, on the other hand, how grand are the principles of Catholic ethics. I have gladly accepted the challenge to give special attention to this precious possession of the Church of Rome. In this way I admit this pamphlet has had to include an area which was not originally contemplated. The Conference address delivered at Chemnitz stands as it was, essentially unaltered on pages 1 to 53. I hope that it will serve now, as it did before, to bring out in bold

touches the contrast between the methods of ethical thought in Romanist and Protestant Christianity respectively. From pages 53 to 176 there follows the controversy with the Romanist theologians who have tried to refute my statements. It will not be without profit to see what it is that compels these men to deny the simple principles of ethics which force themselves upon their own minds as inevitable. The tyrannical supremacy of what their Church calls religious faith excludes that rectitude and uprightness without which no one can attain to clearness of moral vision. Wherever this form of Christianity tries to hold in its grasp men who are prepared to be convinced it becomes violent, and thus both irreligious and immoral. The worst things in the Church of Rome are not the horrors which she would fain see hidden away, but the principles of which she boasts.

W. HERRMANN.

# Preface to the Second German Edition

THERE has reached me from the Catholic side a reply which I should have liked to append in full. In the form of a refutation it corroborates all my criticisms. I shall return to it in an appendix. It is not to be expected that Catholic theology will make any serious attempt to meet the views which are here worked out. In the following pages the thought set forth is that moral obedience and piety are fundamentally the same as thinking for ourselves about ourselves. Moral obedience is the focussing of our thoughts upon the idea of the final aim of our life, an idea which makes our volition really independent or genuine. Piety is the focus-

sing of our thoughts for the contemplation of the Power which draws near to a man when he becomes aware that he is being stirred to the moral act of thinking for himself, or, if you prefer it, when he begins to be really alive. I am of opinion that religion is not a turning away from what is real, but the focussing of our thoughts to which we are led by meeting with One who is real, and in whose presence there is nothing possible for us but to submit ourselves in reverence and in trust. I know no other way of arriving at that but the narrow way of moral obedience, or the way of the law, which conducts us from confusion to intellectual clearness of view. It is only those who follow this way that can become religious. However different piety and moral obedience may be, they are one in this respect at least, that in both of them a man desires to deal seriously with himself and to become sincere.

The Roman Catholic Church urges her members along the opposite path. She fills those who belong to her with the notion that

they would be pious and morally in earnest if they were prepared to be exceedingly circumspect and to suppress their own powers of perception. But whoever lets himself be persuaded that he is saving his soul by running away from what is real, or by deliberate renunciation of truthfulness, will be obliged to abandon any serious consideration whatever of these matters. That slumber of the soul which he expects to help him would be in the utmost danger of being disturbed if he were stirred up to have a personal vision for himself of what is morally good. By the restlessness which the perception of such visions produces, a man is made to feel repulsion for the sloth which consists in a capacity for soothing himself with words which have in them none of the ring of his own personal conviction. One who has been morally awakened can never again get away from the question whether he is sure that these words come from God. What is called in the Roman Catholic Church "caring for his salvation" can no longer be

maintained when, either by his independent perception of what is good, or by the serious earnestness of his conscience, a man has opened his eyes wide enough for God to reveal Himself to him. For this reason Romanist theology dares not launch out upon a vigorous quest for truth in the region of morals. The Romish Church knows that truth is detrimental to her interests. Her ethics may therefore promote the advancement of information about the soul, the knowledge of how weak and how cunning a man is in his times of trouble; but ethical knowledge it cannot promote.

Most of the notices in the German periodicals which have reached me are friendly in tone. One, in the *Kreuzzeitung* of 3rd December 1899, is a decided exception to this. The review is interesting for the information it gives that the writer is Pastor Wolff of Friedersdorf.[1] As the editorship of

[1] According to this the letter M with which the theological outpourings of the *Kreuzzeitung* are so often signed would be understood as an inverted W.

the *Evangelische Kreuzzeitung* has now been handed over to this theologian, we should use his utterances to arrive at the tendency which has long been powerfully influencing the leadership of the Protestant Church in Prussia, but which now, as is evident from the position of its theological productions, while it may still accept a leading place if it is given one, does not wish to fight for one any longer. In Protestant theology there are certain notes which are dying away. But, on the other hand, we encounter in it with special distinctness the monstrous error which hierarchical and pastoral orthodoxy is spreading throughout our nation, even while it claims to represent the cause of Jesus Christ, and does in many respects actually represent it. Against what I have said the article speaks as follows: "He even ventures as far as the following sentence: 'We should feel it to be a sin if we ventured to treat a proposition as true while the ideas contained in it were not our own ideas' (page 103). We are quite prepared to believe him

when he adds: 'The demand that we should do so we feel to be a hindrance to us. The rationalism of the Ritschlian school appears here in all its nakedness.'" So then a person who shrinks from representing a Scripture statement as true the ideas of which are not his own ideas—such a person is reckoned in the *Kreuzzeitung* as a rationalist. On the other hand, a person who represents a Scripture statement as true, although its ideas are not his own—*i.e.*, are not reckoned by him as true—a person who so acts is, in the estimation of the *Kreuzzeitung*, a Christian believer. That position evidently involves the delusion that a person may become inwardly changed by coming into external contact with things which are foreign to his inmost self. That delusion prevails undisturbed in the Roman Catholic Church, and there it hands over Christianity to the jurists. There is no need to have it so among us. We may still count on being understood when we tell the people that they will never become Christians by being ready

to adopt things which can never bring them any inward and spiritual change. They still understand when they are told that Christian faith is heartfelt obedience, that is to say, reverence and trust towards that personal Spirit who, while He leaves no man in the world alone, yet speaks to us most plainly in the Christian Church, in the Bible, and in the Christ they preach. This hope we cherish, because among us the word conscience still has a sound which will not allow itself to be ignored. This word signifies for our people a reminder that the commandment of morality lays claim to our heart of hearts, and so is meant to be no mere limit placed upon our appetites, but the expression of our own inward thought. That experience constitutes a spiritual bond between men and Jesus Christ. But that involves a mighty force, if men feel themselves to be in duty bound to be independent, and know they are lost should they not follow their own convictions. By these means Romanist 'faith' is destroyed, the sort

of faith for which the *Kreuzzeitung* puts in its good word. Whoever wishes to remain morally in earnest must acknowledge to himself that the only authority to which he has the right to subject himself is one which rouses and develops his spiritual independence. That is effected by the personal Spirit, who makes all that find Him see that He alone is worthy to be supreme. But doctrines which claim our 'belief,' although it is impossible for us to conceive of the ideas they express as being the truth, take from us our responsibility for our own thoughts. Such an authority, bringing moral ruin to men, is set up in Rome in the name of Christ. But the Protestant Christianity of the *Kreuzzeitung* is also of opinion that it cannot do otherwise than follow the same line.

And so even in these Protestant circles a defence is set up for the fundamental idea of Jesuit morality, that the moral law, the law of our God, is given us from without, which means that it should not present itself to our consciousness as the expression of our own

inward thought, but should be a limitation placed upon our freedom. In the review referred to I am spoken of as follows: "So in the most determined way he gives up the idea that the moral command is given us by God, that is to say, from without." This sentence is capable of being understood as asserting that I give up the idea that the moral command is God's command. But as I have defended that idea with the utmost possible determination, the sentence must have a different meaning. The reviewer evidently takes objection to my opinion that we are not to regard the law of God as one given us from without, because our God is not a police officer but the Father and Lord of spirits. That is to say, he holds the notion that the moral law, because it is God's law, cannot and ought not to be to us the eternal code of right which we ourselves apprehend. The Protestants of the *Kreuzzeitung* are unaware that with this notion they are steering straight for the destruction of conscience, for the secularisation of

the Church, for the throne of the Pope. Owing to this lack of clearness they are markedly distinguished from consciously Romanist Christians. But perhaps they are aware that the prevalence of their views is diffusing among the nation a characterless Christianity; and perhaps many among them will think that that is just as it should be.

But still many of them are too strongly under the influence of the Bible not to experience painful sensations when Christian faith and Christian morals are within their own circle turned into mere external actions. Nevertheless they shrink back in terror from the idea of Jesus, that in his moral acts the Christian should follow his own convictions, give practical expression to his own moral sense, or bring forth fruit from himself. That is to say, they are involved in a self-contradiction. Now, that may have a cause which is even very respectable. The legal fabric of society, the State, is dissolved if every man

wants to follow his own notions. We must be prepared to obey an authority which has no time to explain its orders to us. Else we arrest the running of the machinery of the State. But for ourselves too, in order to keep in good health there is nothing more necessary than to obey orders. Without taking rest in silent obedience no one sustains the burden of existence. The desire for a strong government is therefore genuinely human, and resistance to it is inhuman folly, from which not only the State must be delivered, but most of all those who are attacked by the disease. They want to defend this truth, but they defend it in the wrong place, when for the sake of it they give up the fundamental idea of Christian morality. Whoever has become morally independent knows how to obey as well. He obeys the powers that be for conscience sake, even when he himself cannot justify their orders. The State must count on such an obedience on the part of spiritually free citizens which is rendered to

the powers that be for conscience sake. But then the very State is badly served, if for its sake we arrest that enfranchisement of the conscience which Jesus Christ has brought into the world. Historical structures like the Church of Rome, which have no good conscience, have a need for the protection that comes of the suffocation of the conscience. The state in which *we* live needs, on the contrary, live consciences.

A similar case arises when Protestant Christians are zealous in assuring us that Christian faith should be an inward conviction, or a part of our thinking, and yet consider it necessary to demand a *belief in doctrines* which have not been grasped as true —a belief, that is to say, which is the very opposite of an inward conviction, or of our thinking. This contradiction is of course to be traced back to the fact that many Protestant Christians, without cutting themselves adrift from the memory of the Reformation, yet do not free themselves from the character-

istics of Romanism. Another thing that works in the same direction is the desire felt to meet a certain stupid lack of religious reverence which needlessly contracts the lives of men. But in this it is of course forgotten that it is only with good that we can overcome evil. But there is one thing more to be considered. All religions which have their roots in a historical tradition are threatened nowadays by a danger which was unknown in earlier times. Their continuance is brought into question by the fact that a science of history has grown up. This science not only sweeps to one side the legends of the Church of Rome, it also renders insecure those historical records on which our faith would fain rely. That this danger is severely felt in our Church is something to be only glad of. But as a rule the method of warding off the danger is only a feeble imitation of the Romish Church. Protection is sought in ordinances, that is, in the means afforded by law. Above all, faith itself is turned into an arrangement

with which every one can comply. In actual fact it is not difficult by these means to render historical inquiry innocuous. For as soon as its results conflict with the statements which under the name of 'faith' have become a Church arrangement they are rejected. Obviously every one has to reject them who wants to belong to a Church resting on such arrangements. All that is quite plain. The government of the Church is carried on upon those principles, and the Christian people quite see that it is all right. But it is just as plain that on these lines we should have a feeble imitation of the Romanist ecclesiastical system, morally as baseless as that is, but far weaker in worldly forces. For we notice at the same time that the leaders of the Protestant Churches cannot be brought to apply those plain principles without hesitation. Certainly the Christian people are often not a little astonished at this lack of decision in a state of things that is so plain. But I am of

opinion that in this hesitation there is to be found a priceless relic of Protestant Christianity. Men can still see that it is morally impossible to save the Church from science by such methods. If, nevertheless, they are for ever grasping at the expedient of making faith into an arrangement which is to be superior to history and to historical inquiry, just as the Roman Catholic Church claims that it should, that is certainly in many cases only an expression of the utmost embarrassment. Even the cleverest people do not know how otherwise it is possible to ward off from the Christian Church the danger with which its foundations are threatened by the historical investigators. It is, in fact, not possible in any other way. But we are not to conclude from that, that we are to adopt this method. That is not true, because Christianity is not to be saved at this time of day by vandalism and self-seeking. On the contrary, we should conclude, that every defence against the danger

must be renounced. The Christian Church, as long as she is in the world, must bear with the fact that the very science whose unhindered activity she must herself advocate if she is to keep a good conscience, is fraught with danger to her. Only on one condition indeed can a Christian in this position remain calm and confident. He must be able to exercise trust that he will always continue to overcome the dangers which he cannot escape. No science can give him that confidence. But he wins it if in the personality of Jesus, as he himself meets with it in the traditional records, he experiences that he is brought into touch with the revelation of that Spirit which lays compulsion on his inmost nature. From that point onwards we can view with calm all the enterprises of historical criticism. For in that experience there has been extinguished any possibility of our regarding the portrait of Jesus as the creation of men who longed for some such revelation of that Spirit. But if He Himself stands undeniably

before us, then He becomes to us the most important element in that reality which makes an impression on our hearts, and on which we meditate when we honestly seek after God. Then by means of His strength we get free from our difficulties. Only those who in this way become witnesses for the reality and power of the personality of Jesus belong to the Christian community. All others are still standing outside it. They cannot be helped by prescribing to them what they are to believe, or by any other external application. But they may be helped indeed, if persons whose hearts that experience has warmed will show themselves kindly to them, and serve them. It is not by means of things that pretend to be imperishable that Christianity continues to live on, but by the fact that there are always persons to be found who by their contact with the Bible tradition become witnesses to the personality of Jesus and follow Him as their guide.

So then, while we can find excuses if the strength of Protestant Christianity in our Church is hampered, and its profoundest difference from Romanist Christianity is obscured, yet we must set to work to prevent this state of things from continuing. For this it is before all else necessary that we should become as clearly as possible conscious of that in which all are fundamentally at one who inwardly belong to Protestant Christianity. We know that we are most deeply divided from Rome by this, that we will not have any immoral Christianity, and therefore will not have any faith which is not an independent conviction. But this purpose evaporates in empty words, if we do not become conscious of the strength in which we have the advantage of the Romanists. Every Protestant Christian can find Jesus for himself, and can make clear to himself as an experience of his own how this personal Spirit not only attracts men and uplifts them, but also confers peace on those who

hold firmly to Him. If our faith arises only out of the power of personal goodness over our hearts, a power which we ourselves grasp, then there is nothing in this faith that is not our own experience and free conviction and gratitude for God's gift. In this there lies a strength which the Roman Catholic Church lacks, and which is more than a match for all her arts. From this alone, too, proceeds real reverence for the Scriptural tradition. Whoever has in any way become conscious that by Holy Scripture as by nothing else he is brought into connection with that personal Spirit whom he must obey and to whom he owes his freedom, will not be without reverence for the Holy Scriptures.

Nevertheless, among us the process still goes on of repressing the pure kind of Protestant Christianity in order to prolong the life of a theology and of an ecclesiastical method which commend to men as the way of salvation, not thinking for themselves, but illusions and the suppression of the ideas

which they really hold to be true. Then, too, it is not to be wondered at that in such a place as the *Kreuzzeitung* the fundamental idea of Jesuit morality can venture out into the open.

W. HERRMANN.

# The Moral Law

## As understood in Romanism and in Protestantism

§ 1. *Protestant and Romanist notions of faith differ too much for faith in one creed to unite us.*

A distinguished Roman Catholic was recently desirous of showing that there still existed an element of belief common to us both. The comfort he administered to us was that, at least as regards their belief in the Apostles' Creed, Catholics and Protestants were at one. We gladly join him in the patriotic desire to give prominence to whatever unites us. But we do not regard the reference to this particular point as a happy one. We do not hold, and we have no right

to hold, the same faith as the Catholics in the Apostles' Creed. Of course there are many evangelical Christians who have accepted the unquestioning use of the statements in this creed as a precious inheritance from their forefathers. But it is not in that habitual use that their faith consists. Whether by this means they actually attain to Christian belief at all, depends entirely upon how they use its statements. Traditions about other people's experiences must help us to form experiences of our own. Otherwise they do not help us at all. Of course we agree with the Catholics in holding that a man is helped by becoming a Christian. But as to how he becomes one, and what he gets by it, our opinions differ greatly.

§ 2. *Romanist faith exercises a powerful and manifold influence on a man, but leaves his inner life unchanged.*

They think it all depends on a man's entrance into the ordered life of the Church.

He must allow himself to be guided by Romish priests. Then he will meekly receive the Sacraments; and he will resolutely reject everything in himself or his surroundings which contradicts the Church's teaching. In this way he possesses Catholic faith and Catholic Christianity. There is no doubt that a man can be powerfully influenced by such means, and that not only outwardly but inwardly as well. We do so easily rust into our accustomed habits! That is what happens, too, with anyone who has formed the habit of keeping definite statements of belief before his mind with all the added emphasis which they receive alike from his anxiety about his soul, from his fear of other believers, and from the authority of the Church. He can in this way secure the disappearance from his own mind of every doubt as to the strength or the truth of what he has allowed to be imposed on him by outward authority. No one can refuse to say of such a person that he has become an unexceptionable specimen of

Catholic Christianity and a convinced defender of Catholic truth. But it does not take long to detect where the fire of such a conviction is burning. This Church brings comfort to many of the persons whom she rules, and subjects them to a discipline which is conducive to the peace of states. There is just one point at which her Christianity stops short. The man's innermost life—the thing he himself wants to be—is untouched by it. The Catholic's own independent life is never to be found *in* his Christianity, but only alongside of it. The only thing in which he is really independent is his desire for happiness. To be saved—that is to say, to be well off throughout the long eternity,—that is what he wants whatever happens. Such a desire after happiness belongs to a man, not by virtue of his Christianity, but by nature. On the other hand, all that a Catholic possesses by virtue of his Christianity he accepts as incumbent on him, because he has been told by other people that he cannot be saved with-

out these burdensome conditions. He makes up his mind to treat as true all that the Church teaches, in the Apostles' Creed for instance. But if something else were offered him as the Church's teaching, he would treat that something else as true in exactly the same way. In fact, the ideas contained in these doctrines do not express his own real opinions. They remain something external to him. He may possibly cling to them with great fervour for fear of losing his salvation. But his own soul does not give birth to these ideas. It regards them only as something in which to wrap itself up, while its own inner life moves among other ideas, which must not of course contradict the Church's teaching, but which would be quite compatible with different doctrines.

§ 3. *Illustration from the Carmelites' scapulary.*

The Carmelites[1] possess an article of cloth-

[1 An order founded in twelfth century on Mount Carmel. First Chapter held 1247 at Aylesford in England;

ing which the Virgin Mary is said to have presented to their Order more than six hundred years ago. He who in his dying hour, confiding in the Holy Virgin, puts that garment on, need give himself no anxiety concerning his salvation. The newer Catholic theology holds it to be quite possible that the Carmelite Order should receive a treasure of such efficacy. At most it ventures to express a doubt or two as to whether the gift actually took place. On the other hand, in the previous century, a cardinal who afterwards as Benedict XIV. became one of the best of Popes, stood up for the legend, which, in fact, forms part of the Romish Breviary. At the same time he defended as theologically unimpeachable the Virgin's declaration: "He that

it elected Simon Stock as General. "According to a pious tradition (fromme Sage) the Holy Virgin, under whose patronage the Order had been placed (by Innocent IV., 1247) had appeared to Simon Stock during prayers and bidden him give the scapulary (Lat. scapulare, a cape, from scapulae, shoulderblades) to his monks as their costume." Wetzer and Welte, *Dictionary of Catholic Theology*, 1848, vol. ii. German, p. 364.]

dies in this coat shall not undergo the fire eternal."[1] This garment, then, is, of course, a completely external means of salvation. But just the same is true of the doctrines which the Catholic 'believes,' as he calls it, without there being anything in himself to lead him to such notions. The decision to believe these doctrines is exactly the same act as the decision to put on the scapulary of the Carmelites. The Catholic does both to secure his salvation. And in both cases he puts on something which has nothing to do with the inner life of his soul.

§ 4. *To Protestants, faith is an inward change, and acceptance of what is not heartily believed is to them a sin.*

Among Protestant Christians, that at least ought not to be the case. It is true, they too

[1] Compare "De Festis Domini nostri Jesu Christi et beatae Mariae Virginis," lib. ii. et vi. Benedict XIV.'s argument is quoted with approval in Wetzer and Welte's *Kirchenlexicon*, 2nd edit., vol. ii. 1868, and seems therefore to express the position occupied by Catholic science to-day.

will often say they believe in the teachings and narratives of the Bible. But in the strict sense of the words, the object of their faith is something quite different. According to our view a man does not become a Christian by deciding to treat these as true, and then trying to regulate his conduct accordingly. Such a person we consider still far short of being a Christian. He becomes one only if those doctrines and narratives of the Bible help him to that inward change which is what we really call Christianity. A Catholic will object: "But it is certain that the Bible cannot give me any help, if I do not accept its doctrines as true; and so my first step must be to decide to do so." In so saying he raises the very point on which Catholic and Protestant faith part company.[1] For to his objection we

[1 I regretfully decide that here and elsewhere the German 'evangelisch' must be rendered 'Protestant.' In Germany, as in France and Italy, Protestants are increasingly preferring the word evangelical as less negative (though protesting has its positive side too), and as free from certain associations fixed to 'Protestant' by adversaries.]

must reply: "The decision which your side demands as the primary one is contrary to our conscience. We should feel it to be a sin if we ventured to treat a proposition as true while the ideas contained in it were not our own ideas. If we find a statement of that kind in the Bible, we may very well decide to wait and see whether the truth of it will not become evident to us, as we ourselves become inwardly clearer and stronger. But we could promise ourselves no good results from a resolution to treat it as true without further question. The demand that we should do so, we feel to be a temptation to us. It can only prevent our being taken up with what really can help us."

### § 5. *Protestant faith arises out of actual experience of facts—of our moral need, of God in our life, of God in Christ, etc.*

For earnest men there is ultimately no interest in anything but in what is real, *i.e.*, what they can pronounce and must for them-

selves pronounce to be real. Such realities are the more important to us in proportion as we notice that they enable us to make progress, widening, for instance, our circle of vision, enhancing our joy in life, rendering our intellectual activity clearer and stronger. Most important of all to us would be a reality that gave us the impression of being powerful enough completely to revolutionise us. The notion of such a spiritual revolution is a current one with us all. We understand what is meant by the challenge, "Repent!"[1] It means we must labour to rise above the life which nature has given us. As long as we remain completely dependent on our environment, as long as we fulfil simply the desires of the flesh, we perish in the eternal dead-level. Under such conditions we are not independent, and therefore we are not really alive. We are seldom quite without a warning that this state

[1 "Repent." The unusual German phrase here, "alter your mind," is an attempt to render literally the Greek word for 'repent,' μετανοεῖν.]

of things must not always continue with us, but that we must attain to true life. But more distinctly still there stands before us the fact that we cannot do so by ourselves. We see what it is we need, the spirit's control over the flesh, an end to our dependence on our environment, spiritual independence, an outlook on a future full of pure and eternal aims. Whoever is acutely conscious of these needs experiences at first profound sadness and impotence. But there are many who have escaped out of this distress. One of the ways in which that is possible is by our ceasing to be sensitive to it. We can little by little accustom ourselves to the fact that no river of the joy of life flows through the secret places of our heart. Especially so long as things go tolerably well with us, we can be satisfied, if at least occasional moments of comfort are granted us. But, all the same, it is spiritual death to be able to forget how poor we are. But throughout the whole of humanity there have always been men of

another kind. Individual souls here and there have always both achieved and laid to heart experiences by reason of which they have occupied a new position in life, no longer as dependents on the charity of chance, but as themselves rich. But this happened to them only for the reason that they did not trifle life away, but while striving earnestly to attain a purpose that was both morally clear to them and not to be shaken, listened to what their experiences had to tell them. And so every-one of them came through experiences of his own which showed him that the soul's pure and strong life of goodness and righteousness, after which he himself yearned, was, in fact, the manifestation of the Power who is over all. Of the way in which this faith in God, armed with a "nevertheless" (Ps. lxxiii. 23), fought against experiences which contradicted it, the Old Testament gives us the most powerful picture. But the case is the same with Christian faith as well. Each of us has discovered in what he has himself experienced

such indications of a spiritual Power, that he knows himself to be under obligation to a full self-surrender in reverence and in trust. For us, too, this faith in God lives on through dark hours, only by resolute obedience to that spiritual Power which has hidden itself from us perhaps for the moment, but the reality of which has been at other times incontestably clear to us. In One alone is the faith we cherish ampler still. We have before us the personality of Jesus. We are able very clearly to contemplate how He experienced the consciousness of God's near presence, how He drew from that nearness a vigour of moral perception not otherwise known to us, and an unconquerable strength of will. Only we must not fail to listen to the admonition which penetrates to our hearts in the fact of the Christian community and in the teaching it has handed down in Holy Scripture. Any one who yearns for strength and freedom in his own inner life may well pay attention when earnest men tell them they have learnt

these in the New Testament from Jesus Himself and from men on whom He had laid His hand. It is this admonition which we have obeyed. Thus the idea of that spiritual Life which claims our entire self-surrender, the idea of our God, has been rendered far more full of meaning for us. In the conflict in which Jesus was engaged and in that courageous attitude to life which He aroused in His disciples, this idea comes near enough to us to be grasped. But along these lines we have discovered more still. If the personal life of Jesus captivates us by the wonderful capacity which His moral perfectness possesses of being intuitively perceived, then the confident trust which this Man maintained even unto death, grips us with the force of a tremendous fact. All who come to know Him and to experience His power over their spirits, must become freed thereby from the forces of inward corruption, and from all that makes them spiritless and miserable. On this trust which Jesus maintained our faith is reared.

Of course this will only be the case if Jesus has become to us in some sense a guide to higher things; if, that is, our courage has risen so high for His sake as to see in a spirit of goodness and righteousness the manifestation of the Power who is over all.

§ 6. *To such faith Scripture brings contact with the God we know, not a demand for acquiescence in statements we do not grasp.*

For us, then, faith is a personal conviction which is based within ourselves on experiences of our own, though we can neither convey it to, nor force it upon, any one else by logical proof. The actual realities which we had to undergo, if we lived through them with earnest longing after the strengthening and freeing of our souls, allowed bright glimpses to penetrate to us of a Spirit in whom all after which we are struggling upwards is already perfectly realised as a living whole. The personality of Jesus has been the clearest information which

has reached us about this Spirit. If this is our position, then we see in the Holy Scriptures something quite different from what the Catholic sees in them. We look in Scripture for the revelation of a personal Spirit, who is known to us, but who remains to us unfathomable. Scripture attracts us because it promises us the fullest experience of that which makes us really alive, namely, contact with a personal Life which fills us with pure reverence and with profoundest confidence, and leads us by these to glad obedience. But Holy Scripture is never to us a law claiming from us anything so unreasonable as acquiescence in phrases we do not understand to be true. A Holy Scripture which made that claim upon us we should regard, not as a word of God, but as the voice of the tempter, who must not be allowed to get the better of us. Therefore it will not trouble us if we find in Holy Scripture much that is strange and unintelligible to us. Is any passage of that kind to be allowed to press upon us with the weight of a statute

law? Perhaps we should simply set it on one side. Perhaps it will be intelligible to us later on, if we do the one thing needful, *i.e.*, if we obey God who is revealing Himself to *us*. But let us have nothing to do with treating as true anything which we do not ourselves see to be true. We remember what name Jesus has applied to a divergence like this between a man's inmost heart and his outward conduct.

§ 7. *Whatever unites us with Roman Catholics, we must beware of Romanist faith, which blights individuals and nations.*

So, then, it is not of great importance if we do agree with the Catholics in the phrasing of some Christian doctrines. And, on the other hand, it is not of great importance that we differ from them in our conception of many Christian doctrines. Thank God, the variety among ourselves in this respect is sufficiently wide. The real thoughts of men who are religiously alive are not capable of being forced to wear any single uniform.

They may sound alike, but they will always remain different from one another. We are gloriously at one if, in the spiritual force which touches us in the Scriptures and, above all, in the person of Jesus, we have laid hold of that God who "is in secret." But the notions of Him in the minds of any two or three of us will be as various as were those of Paul and John and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Our reformers believed themselves to be linked to many earnest Roman Catholics by just such a living union. Nor will we let ourselves be deprived of that assurance. But we mean to have nothing in common with the 'faith' of the Romish Church. From our own experience we know this Romish faith to be a profound destruction of the soul, and we ask God to save us from it. No temptation is more dangerous to us than the temptation to attribute to ourselves thoughts which are really foreign to our minds. It allures us, because we should be helped, true enough, if we had a different inner life

—that is to say, different thoughts. But it is the undoing of us, because it is the opposite of thinking for ourselves, and this alone constitutes our way to God. But, further, it makes us guilty of the undoing of others; for a faith of that kind, owing to its arbitrariness and its inward instability, is all the more violent in the trouble it takes to make others like itself. What is repugnant to us in the Romish Church is not, in the first instance, *what is believed* there. We exercise patience for that even in bad instances, and take it good-humouredly, just as we do the belief of princes of the Romish Church in the strange fancies of Taxil.[1] But we are obliged

[1 Léo Taxil, pseudonym of a Parisian journalist who completely gulled clerical Europe with a stream of publications during twelve years from 22nd April 1885, when he pretended conversion, to 19th April 1897, when he lectured to journalists only on "Diana Vaughan." Papal bulls and letters had been increasingly bitter against Freemasons, Leo XIII. calling masonry the Kingdom of Satan on earth. Taxil, who had actually been a mason a few months, and who was well informed in Jesuit doctrines of devilry, 'revealed' the worship of Satan and the obscene orgies of the inner circles of freemasonry. "Miss D. Vaughan"

to take up a different position with regard to the *way in which they believe.* For that is only one particular manifestation of the moral slumber which the Romish Church spreads abroad over the nations. What divides us from Rome is still the same to-day that Luther expressed in the words: "The papacy in Rome founded by the devil." We are no longer so coarse as Luther, and, besides, we do not deny that the popes were in former times the teachers and educators of the nations towards what was good. But for all that we see even more plainly to-day than Luther did, that the Romish Church is paralysing the moral conflict in individual men, and is contributing more by this means to the political

was one of his creations. The Pope and Cardinal Parocchi, and other ecclesiastics, delighted with this crushing exposure, wrote letters to her, the Cardinal's secretary assuring her he had "material and psychological proofs not only of her existence but of her honesty." Many of the 'revelations' were grotesquely and incredibly incredible. See two small pamphlets: Count P. Von Hoensbroech, *Religion oder Aberglaube,* and especially H. C. Lea, *Leo Taxil, D. Vaughan et l'Eglise romaine*; *Histoire d'une Mystification.* Paris, 1901.]

and social decline of whole nations than by that frustration of intellectual culture which, in spite of the protests of our Catholic fellow-countrymen, she persists in cherishing and in regarding as one of the conditions of her existence.

### § 8. *For Romanist morals are the death of morality.*

We recognise, of course, that Roman Catholics are taught, not only among ourselves but in civilised lands generally, to reject murder, adultery, and thieving from their ordinary mode of life. That has to do with morality, but it would be going too far to say it *is* morality. It is worth a great deal to us that we can venture to think with cordial respect of Catholics who, as morally clear-sighted and earnest men, have an abundant life themselves and are a blessing to others.

But what the Church of Rome in its official capacity calls morality is the death of the

moral sense. It is much more important to make this fact clear than to give prominence to what the Roman Catholic and Evangelical Churches hold in common.

§ 9. *The points of contrast usually recognised between Protestant and Romanist morals.*

In any comparison of Christian with Roman Catholic morals, the following errors are, as a rule, brought into view. The Roman Catholic Church denies the religious and moral importance of a man's calling, and in consequence she urges men to duties arbitrarily chosen for them, while she conceals from them the fact that their duty is always indicated in the relationships which lie immediately about them. She denies the unlimited nature of duty, and in consequence she creates the delusion of works that have a moral value and that go beyond the measure of absolute duty. She breaks up the moral law into a whole series of separate requirements, and in consequence she gives birth to the delusion

that man is able of himself perfectly to fulfil the moral law. She destroys the oneness of moral life, for she lays down a twofold morality within the Christian community—one for the perfect and the other for the laity. But she also stands in the way of the oneness of moral life in individual Christians by preventing them from finding in their efforts faithfully to fulfil their calling the peace and stability of the man whom God sets free.

§ 10. *A far deeper distinction is covered by verbal agreement in one maxim.*

It is not without good reason that we think of these points first of all. For in these the contrast between the Catholic Church and ourselves is manifest on the surface. Moreover, the Reformers long ago pointed out the moral depravity which they involve. But in all this the profoundest flaw in the Catholic conception of ethics has not yet been clearly indicated. It will be plain to us only when we have recalled the great fundamental prin-

ciple which appears to unite us with the Church of Rome in the conception of morals. If we confine ourselves to the words, we are at one with them in asserting that the command of morality is the command of God.

§ 11. *Protestantism means by it that the moral law is a link with the love behind law, and the discovery brings joy and strength.*

For us this principle holds good all through. We have grounds for believing that by His moral requirement God means to draw us into participation in His own life, so that we may become in our inmost selves subject to Him. Just in proportion as this idea is established among us Christians, it frees us from the helplessness into which the moral law by itself ultimately leads us. If a man is left alone with his conscience and the performance of his moral obligations, he is either filled with sadness and unrest, or else he secures happiness by refusing to think. People who refuse to think we shall have, as

a rule, to leave to themselves till their own conscience compels them to think. Perhaps we should be able to bring such dead people to life if we were spiritually more alive ourselves. But we ought, at any rate, to join hands with those who are still fighting for their life, and over and over again to weigh the following considerations. If our conscience still tells us what we ought to do and to be, we are at the same time also aware that with all our efforts we can never—without faith in God—overcome either our ever-recurring uncertainty about what we ought to do or our sense of ever-increasing guilt. In such a condition a man is not happy. But for that very reason he has no strength to do right. He himself, of course, can discover no more than the truth that the cause of his unhappiness is that he does not do more. But on high, far above his grief, there is an entirely different judgment passed on his soul, namely, that he is without moral strength just because he is unhappy. He has lost his touch with

what alone can resolve our spiritual difficulty and make our heart glad. That is not the moral law, the idea of what is intrinsically good by itself, but the reality of the omnipotent good Will, our God. It is the beginning of a life more than that of the brutes when, by means of the command of morality, a man becomes aware that it is his meat to know himself united to the Eternal, and that it is his health to have a good conscience. But to a man once aroused to such a desire the world soon becomes intolerable, if he does not trace in it the omnipotence of a Will the purpose of whose life lies within the range of our own moral perceptions, and whose love belongs to that personal life a spark of which glows in us also. But if the comforting impression is made upon us that through all the transformations of actual existence an omnipotent Will for good moves along its path seeking us alike in our daily experiences and in the voice of the eternal law, then we have found God, the God who will create for

us the possibility of being morally earnest and yet at the same time happy. Do you ask how we arrive at that? There is only one way. It is by perceiving that which through Jesus Christ has come into the world with complete clearness. And yet there are ways innumerable, just as many as there are people. Each man has to observe in his own life the fact that this Will for good, while weak within himself, is yet omnipotent over him and full of marvellous grace.

§ 12. *Rome means it is God's, and therefore external to us; whereas the Ethical Society says it is our own, and therefore not God's at all.*

For us that is the meaning of the fundamental principle to which we referred.[1] The knowledge expressed by it creates for us the possibility of being able to live under the law. The Catholic Church, to all appearance, pos-

[1 *I.e.*, that the command of morality is God's command, § 11.]

sesses the same knowledge. She, too, teaches that the moral law is God's law. But does that mean the same to her as it does to us? If it did, we should stand shoulder to shoulder with her in opposition to people of the kind who meet in the Ethical Society.[1] That would unite us very closely with the Catholic Church. For while it is true that this society is not a very powerful opponent, yet that out of which it has grown is a monstrous, world-wide, corrupting force, viz., the incapacity of people to think for themselves about themselves. In spite of that we cannot in fighting against it unite with the Catholic Church. For it is not easy to say which of the two stands the nearer to the Gospel, that presumably non-religious representative of moral idealism, or this Church. On the one side you have an enthusiastic interpretation of the fundamental idea of the moral sentiment. That is to say, you have the thought, not that the law is God's command, but that the law

[1 Gesellschaft für ethische Kultur.]

is true. On the other side, in the Catholic Church, you find her fervid religious devotion to the name of Jesus Christ. Which of these weighs the heavier? Perhaps we could not bring ourselves to answer that question. But yet there is one thing of which we must be sure. Jesus will Himself reject those who while they praise His name are trying to make void His holy law. But that is what the Catholic Church is doing; and she is doing it with the very conception which she holds of that fundamental principle in which she seems to agree with us. With her the idea that the command of morality is God's command implies that for that very reason it is no law of ours. But that implies that the religious idea is here so distorted that it comes to be a complete annihilation of the moral sentiment.

### § 13. *Two lines of proof: Jesuit 'truth' and 'Probabilism.'*

That is a serious accusation. But we can prove that it is correct by two examples; first

by the attitude of the Catholic Church towards truthfulness, and, secondly, by what she calls the doctrine of 'Probabilism.'

§ 14. *Cathrein's 'Moral Philosophy' blames certain Protestants for allowing untruths in cases of necessity.*

The Jesuit Cathrein has recently produced a treatise on the philosophy of morals marked by great industry, and especially so in regard to his knowledge of the literature of his subject. We are justified in taking for granted that this book[1] accurately reflects the conception of ethics prevailing in the Church of Rome. That is vouched for by the Order which has approved the book and by the position of that Order in the Catholic Church of to-day. We are not concerned to deny that other theologians may differ from that book in particular points, or that Cathrein himself represents peculiarities on which he feels himself to be an original thinker. But so far as these are

[1] Compare Cathrein, *Moralphilosophie*, edit. 3; 1899.

concerned, it is always a question of small differences, in which a brilliant ingenuity may perhaps display itself, but which are of no importance to the distinction between Romanist and Protestant morals. In that book, then, truthfulness is defined as the will to speak as we think. Opposed to truthfulness, it says, is lying, *i.e.*, an utterance by which the man purposely places himself in contradiction to what he thinks. The writer then informs us that among Protestants there are many who would be prepared to defend lies, under certain definite conditions, as lies of necessity. Among the philosophers he names Paulsen, Wundt, and Ziegler; among the theologians the Lutherans, Martensen, and Harless. He blames these men severely for their lax principles with regard to lying. On the other hand, he boasts of the Catholics as having from time immemorial rejected every sort of lie, and praises Kant for his declaration that even to save the whole world we have no right to tell a lie.

§ 15. *His attack may be met, but he himself wrongly narrows his definition of truth to true words.*

Now all that sounds very much in earnest. But it is not an expression of moral earnestness or obedience. First, it is not correct to say that truthfulness is the will to *speak* as we think. That is only one very important way of evincing truthfulness in human intercourse. It is one duty which flows from truthfulness. But that this duty stands first in every case where we have to do with mankind is rightly contested by the authors whom the Jesuit blames. Cases can be imagined in which the strength of a man's moral sense will manifest itself precisely in the decision to use untrue speech. Just as a Christian may read in a particular situation into which God has led him the moral obligation resting on him to use force, so he may also find himself in situations in which he can remain morally free and pure only by deciding to utter untrue speech. Very frequently the attempt to speak

the truth even in such cases will issue in the speaker's all the more thorough deception of himself. He means to be truthful, and after all he is only the prudent person who holds it safer to obey a rule, although he is far from being convinced of the moral correctness of what it enjoins. The man who meets with a criminal on his way to commit his crime, the leading actor face to face with a crowd excited by the cry of fire—for both of these the circumstances may be so constituted that they can find only in untrue speech the help which they cannot but feel called upon to render. The man, therefore, who disdains to use these means will imagine that he is saving his soul, but he abandons to destruction alike the criminal and his victim, and the unhappy people in the theatre. Similar situations may occur in dealing with maniacs, but sometimes, too, with other sick people, and with children as well. When we have to deal with persons with whom we cannot and ought not for the moment to have full intellectual

fellowship, it will not always be morally possible for us to keep our words in unison with what we ourselves think. Very near to that admission, doubtless, lies the serious danger of our justifying ourselves by an appeal to practical results even in cases where untruthful speech is mere cowardice, that is to say, lack of trust in God, or unbelief. But our power of moral choice must just find a way of its own out of such dangers. At any rate, we must not conceal from ourselves that under certain definite circumstances the use of untrue speech is not only permitted, but may be our duty. Of course, the untrue speech must be accompanied by the purpose of removing the deception to the best of our ability, as soon as the possibility offers, just as we should remove anything of any kind that formed an intellectual or spiritual barrier between such persons and ourselves.[1]

[1 The following extract from 'Ethik,' by Dr W. Herrmann (in *Grundriss der Theologischen Wissenschaften. Mohr.*)

## § 16. *But the wider duty of being true is systematically ignored by Rome.*

Nevertheless, the position which is taken up by the Jesuit I have referred to, and for

ed. 2, 1901, § 11, p. 34, will help to explain the author's position in many passages.

"The effect [of the moral law on a man's life] is a two-fold one. In the first place, in this way there is set up a sincere intellectual and spiritual fellowship between men. Whereas they are as much divided as they are united by their inclinations, they come into complete mental and spiritual unity only by all keeping before themselves the same unconditional commandment. In the second place, the individuals attain thereby a spiritual condition in which they are truly independent. Whoever can say to himself that he wills what he himself discerns to be eternally necessary, knows that by virtue of this will of his he has a part in the realisation of what is recognised by all reasonable beings as the final aim of all things. The consciousness of this union with the eternal cannot but render the man inwardly upright and make him independent. He knows that in that which he himself wants to be he can be opposed by no higher wisdom, that in willing this he can never become a mere means employed by others, and that all outward forces which threaten his existence with annihilation cannot extinguish his title to exist.

. . . . . .

"Mental and spiritual fellowship among men and mental and spiritual independence on the part of the individual—that is what we can ourselves recognise to be prescribed

which he appeals to Kant, will appear to be the stricter one in morals. But this apparent moral strictness in the matter of truth is moral want of clearness, as will perhaps be plain if we consider that truthfulness obviously implies far more than the duty of *speaking* the truth. All those who are blamed by the Jesuit are, it is true, of opinion that in cer-

to us by the moral law. Each of the two is a particular expression of what is morally good. We ought at every moment to make the rule of our conduct this: Thou shouldst throw thy whole being into the effort to attain the profoundest and most far-reaching fellowship with other men that is possible; and at the same time this also: Thou shouldst be inwardly independent, and in virtue of that truly alive. Both of these propositions go together. For only by willing what we ourselves recognise to be eternally the final aim of all things can we regard ourselves as independent beings, and so as free masters of the circumstances in which our existence is placed. On the other hand, the mental and spiritual fellowship which we are obliged to conceive of as the final aim is possible only among independent beings. For whoever lacks inward independence has nothing in him that he can give to others. In that case he may indeed, as a thing, serve as a means employed by others. He renders this service even without taking any notice of it. He means to exploit others and is being exploited by others Fellowship with them he can have none."]

tain carefully defined circumstances untruthful speech is a duty. But they are at the same time of opinion that we ought to *be* truthful under all circumstances. But the Jesuit never gives a thought to this truthfulness which ought always to permeate a man. Therein appears the limitation of his moral system and of that of the Catholic Church as a whole. For the purpose of saving herself the Catholic Church acts as if there were no such thing as real truthfulness. For wherever men begin to grasp the duty of being truthful in the full and serious sense of the term, as a fundamental requirement of morality, there they cease to be Roman Catholic at heart.

### § 17. *Truthfulness is the readiness to recognise facts.*

Truthfulness is the readiness to recognise realities as such, and not to hide them from ourselves. But that implies living according to our own perceptions without regard to

consequences. That is the most important obligation resting on scientific inquirers. But just the same truthfulness in another form is required of every man. We must create no illusions for ourselves as to our own circumstances, but fearlessly and earnestly face facts as they are. Dreamers are but shadows of men. The men God wants, the men in whom beat the pulses of strength and life, are the truthful men, who are nourished on reality, which is to be found in the work and the word of God. Whoever wants to get rid of facts is turning his back on God, for the omnipotent God dwells in realities.

§ 18. *This is lacking in Rome's treatment of historical science, where we are similarly tempted.*

The unwillingness of the Jesuit to consent to truthfulness in this fuller sense is in thorough agreement with the fact that the Church of Rome can continue to exist only if she hinders science from being truthful. It

is true that she has come to an understanding with natural science. We have heard the longing only recently expressed in Roman Catholic circles for the "blessed fires at the stake" and for the dungeons of the Inquisition. But the speakers have scarcely been thinking of places for the students of nature. Just now it was the historians' turn. It is these that the Church of Rome would be glad to lock up, even though she does open her archives to them under authorised restrictions. In this uneasiness about historical research, we might easily feel as she does. We ourselves are under temptation to wish for limits to historical research. For Christianity has its foundations, not only in what is eternal, but also in events which once happened and which still live as an inextinguishable memory in our hearts. But we can overcome that temptation. For we know Christianity as a form of the spiritual life which develops with the times —a form, therefore, which changes. So, then, if historical criticism compels us to yield up

to her some specially precious elements of our traditional belief, we are able to believe that by a loss of that kind God means to make us richer. In that case we can believe that we shall only then rightly behold in its power the Unity on which all else depends. The Church of Rome, on the contrary, is undone if she concedes that general councils have ever erred or that popes have done so in decisions given *ex cathedrâ*. Therefore, she cannot admit a historical inquiry which honestly puts the question whether or not a particular event has taken place. She can make use only of those historians who allow themselves to be set the task of proving that some particular event did not so happen. But research which lets itself be so employed is no longer a science with an ethical code of honour, but an immoral play of ingenuity. Even Catholic scholars are feeling it. On that account it is inevitable that in their mind, and in that of all Catholics who are capable of sympathising with them in a conflict like this, the claims of the Church

of Rome should come into violent collision both with their moral duty and with the very existence of their science, the laws of each of which are as indestructible as ever the Church of Rome itself can be. In the long run, there is no room in the world for two things so opposed to one another as sincere historical research and the Church of Rome.

§ 19. *Rome's doctrine of faith obscures the moral instincts, as is seen in Gury's instructions in speaking the truth.*

If the Roman Catholic moralist will not recognise truthfulness in the full sense of the term, that is in complete accord with the relations just indicated between that Church and science. But the chief point is, that the Roman Catholic Church renounces truthfulness in order to save herself. It is true there is much earnest talk about the duty of not telling lies to others. But in all that, not a thought is bestowed upon the fact that, when a man tells lies to himself, he at last un-

consciously, but with his whole being, exerts on his surroundings the force of a great untruth. The reason why they do not give it a thought is, that for fear of endangering their own salvation they are unwilling to face the simple fundamental obligation of truthfulness. To assure themselves of salvation they consider it necessary to hold traditional doctrines as true, although the notions expressed in those doctrines are not their own notions. But if they mean to be saved at the expense of their conscience, then the fundamental conception of all moral sense, the very understanding of what a moral command in the widest sense is, must have already perished in them, or, at least, become obscured. The Roman Catholic Church sets zealously to work to suppress such an understanding in the persons she wishes to educate as Christians. We get a clear view of that fact if we let another Jesuit tell us how the duty of never using untrue speech—a duty set before us as an unconditional one—should be discharged by a Catholic Christian.

One of the most influential teachers of Catholic morals is the French Jesuit, J. P. Gury, who died in 1866. In one of his widely read volumes we read as follows (*Casus Conscientiae*, ed. 6, Paris, 1881; vol. i. pp. 183–4):—[1]

[1 It is as well to give the original Latin, as in a recent controversy on Jesuit morals in the *Westminster Gazette*, the Jesuit pretended that a distinguished Oxford theologian had mistaken the meaning from want of knowledge of Latin or of German! I give it from Gury, ed. 5, 1875, vol. i. pp. 182 f.:—"Casus II. Restrictio mentalis. Anna, cum adulterium commisisset, viro de hoc suspicanti et sciscitanti respondit prima vice se matrimonium non fregisse; secunda vice, cum jam a peccato fuisset absoluta, respondit: *Innocens sum a tali crimine.* Tandem tertia vice, adhuc instante viro, adulterium prorsus negavit dixitque: *Non commisi,* intelligendo adulterium tale quod tenear revelare; seu: Non commisi adulterium tibi revelandum. Hinc: Quaer: An damnanda Anna? Solutio 418. In triplici memorato casu, Anna a mendacio excusari potest. Etenim *in primo casu* dicere potuit se matrimonium non fregisse, siquidem adhuc substitit. *In secundo casu* potuit dicere se innocentem esse ab adulterii crimine, siquidem, peracta confessione, et recepta absolutione, ejus conscientia ab illo non amplius gravabatur, cum certitudinem moralem haberet illud sibi remissum fuisse. Imo potuit hoc asserere etiam cum juramento, juxta S. Lig. n. 162.—Less.—Salm.—Suar.—cum sententia communi. *In tertio casu* potuit etiam *probabiliter* negare

Probabilism

"Anna, who has been unfaithful to her marriage vow, answers her husband (who suspects it, and questions her) the first time: that she has not broken their marriage relationship; the second time (after being absolved from the sin) she answers: I am not guilty of any crime of the kind. Finally, the third time, as her husband presses her, she denies the adultery altogether, and says, 'I have not committed it'; meaning in her own mind, 'an act of adultery which I am bound to disclose.'

"Has Anna in any one of these cases acted wrongly?

"In all three cases Anna is to be acquitted of the charge of lying. For she could say the first time she had not broken their marriage relationship, because their marriage still

se adulterium commisisse intelligendo, ita ut peccatum marito revelare deberet; eodem modo quo reus potest dicere judici non legitime interroganti: *Crimen non commisi,* id est intelligendo se non commisisse ita ut teneatur illud ei manifestare. Sic ad haec omnia S. Lig. n. 162, cum aliis bene multis."]

remained intact. The second time she could say she was not guilty of the adultery, since, after confession made and absolution received, her conscience was no longer burdened by the adultery committed, she being morally certain that it was forgiven her. Indeed, she could even confirm this answer with an oath according to St Ligorius, according to Lessius and Salmeron and Suarez, according to the universal opinion. The third time, too, she might probably (according to a 'probable' opinion) deny that she had committed an act of adultery, thinking in her own mind: such an act as she would have been obliged to confess to her husband: exactly as an accused person may answer a judge who questions him in an illegal manner: 'I have not committed the crime,' while understanding by the words: 'such a crime as I should be obliged to confess.' In all these respects St Ligorius has expressed himself in the same sense along with very many others."

§ 20. *This sheds an unpleasant light on boasted Roman Catholic piety.*

These words of Gury's reveal the moral emptiness of the piety which is allowed to spread throughout his Church. From her certainty that she has received the forgiveness of her sin, the woman Anna deduces the right to deceive her husband. According to the Gospel, forgiveness means that moral courage is given back to the sinner by the wonderful experience that the Holy One is seeking him, the sinner. In this case, on the contrary, forgiveness means simply a remission of penalty, by which the sinner's position is changed, but not his heart. It is not to be wondered at that Anna draws from a 'forgiveness' of that kind courage for fresh sin. It is also remarkable that Gury calls the imagination that she has received such a remission of penalty 'moral certainty.' What is the meaning of the word 'moral' in that connection?

§ 21. *Did Cathrein tell a lie in saying Rome demanded absolute truthfulness of speech always?*

But, as we read that lesson on true speech and lying, the question forces itself upon us, whether Cathrein had not read his famous fellow-Jesuit's book which appeared in so many editions. The book is, of course, as well known to him as the fact that Gury may appeal for his conception of the matter to very distinguished comrades—above all, to St Alphonse, the founder of the Order of Redemptorists.[1] But then a curious suspicion arises in our minds. Cathrein has declared that it is our duty under all circumstances to utter true speech, a declaration which possessed the great advantage of producing an impression of special moral energy. He has also asserted that Catholics have from time immemorial rejected all kinds of untrue speaking as forbidden. At the same time, this man of moral strictness has expressed his indignation against

[1] See note, p. 187.

Protestants who pronounce untrue speaking to be, under certain well-defined circumstances, a duty. If, then, in spite of that, he knows this utterance of Gury's, and is aware how widely this way of thinking is current in the Romish Church, then it appears to us that only one possible opinion is left us: Has not the Catholic teacher of morals himself spoken untruth in all this, in order to lead ill-informed readers astray?[1]

§ 22. *No; for the 'truthfulness' he refers to is Rome's, and covers words only, and not the heart.*

But in that we should be doing Cathrein an injustice. It is true that not merely we ourselves, but many respectable Catholics, at least in Germany, will be unanimous in thinking that Gury has in those words of his offered an inducement to the most infamous lying. But

[1 See *The Spectator* for 13th June 1903 for an interesting review of "Du Mensonge Proprement Dit et du Droit à la Vérité," Paris, Blond et Cie., a defence of lies published by the authority of the 'Vicaire-général.']

it is far more interesting to note that it is by those very words that Gury is giving instructions for being, after a Catholic fashion, strictly truthful. In our judgment the woman Anna is horribly untruthful. In the judgment of Catholics she is blameless. This judgment of Catholics we must presuppose in Cathrein. The woman is making even honest efforts to fulfil that very duty of truthfulness which the learned Jesuit pronounced to be an unconditional one. She so chooses her words that she can set them down as the expression of actual realities. It is true she tries at the same time so to arrange them as once more to deceive the husband to whom she has already been false. But in that there is shown the kind of morality to which the Catholic Church trains men, and which it gets scholars like Cathrein to defend. The Catholic Christian is to take pains to perform certain definitely prescribed actions. If the action accords with the prescription, then he is free to look after his own private interests alongside of that to

the best of his ability. If a man has done enough to satisfy the claims of the command, he may do as he likes as regards the rest.

§ 23. *To say that the act counts and not the heart, would set the inner man against God's claim.*

Perhaps there are not a few among us Protestant Christians who answer to all this: "Why, that is quite right; we, too, think the same." Whoever acknowledges that to himself may say to himself, further, that his ideas are Catholic, but not those of Jesus. Let us remind ourselves once again in what sense the Church of Rome understands morality. The Catholic Christian is to obey laws by which particular actions are prescribed to him. If he so acts, he has satisfied the requirements of morality, and for the rest he can do as he likes. That is false. For, in the first place, the command is thus felt to be a burden and a limitation. In that case the man's heart is not occupied with what the law requires, but with what is left for himself. Assuredly it cannot

be said of a man like that that he hungers and thirsts after righteousness, or that it is his meat to do the will of God. He has nothing to do with Jesus Christ.[1]

§ 24. *Secondly, it would emphasise the form instead of the substance of each command.*

In the second place, the real substance of the command of morality is not thought of at all. How different it is with the words of Jesus! He takes incessant pains to make clear to men that the command by which the merit or demerit of a man is determined requires something far more comprehensive than particular actions. The commands which Jesus addresses to all His disciples are always directed to that which is most inward in men, to that which must affect all particular actions, to the moral sense. It is a complete misunderstanding of these commands to suppose that

[1 Matt. v. 6: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." John iv. 34: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me."]

they can be fulfilled in particular moments. For they claim the whole man always. Jesus sums up all that is required of us in the command of love to God and to our neighbour. However often we may have thought over this commandment, which means life or death for us, we still perhaps confess to ourselves that we have not yet fully fathomed its thought. But, at any rate, it does not merely tell a man how he is to act at particular moments, but what he is to be always. Nor is it difficult to grasp what it is that, according to this law, we are to be. To find real delight in this alone, that God, whom we have come to know, should rule in us, and that we should be united to our neighbour—that is the form of the inner life which this law requires. But if a man fulfils that condition, then to him the command is no longer the barrier, on the far side of which would lie his independence, the free scope he wants for his own interests. For there is nothing dearer to his own heart than that God should rule in him, and that his

being should be intertwined with that of his neighbour. The Catholic Church, while she cannot altogether evade this command, yet does not allow it to stand for what it is, for *the* law.[1]

§ 25. *Thirdly, it leads to equivocations which ruin a man's relations with his neighbour.*

In the third place, and lastly, a man who 3. thinks only of laws which prescribe particular actions will always end by acting like that Catholicly correct woman Anna. He will say to himself, for example: In every case where you utter anything, you are to speak exactly as you think, and with your words you are to express actual facts. But, at the same time, he will always make the attempt to come to terms with the command in the way most convenient to himself. So, when it is important to him that a person who asks, and has a right to ask him, shall not learn a certain fact, he will be at pains to give his

[1 Compare note, p. 128.]

answer in such a shape that while it is not absolutely false, it yet may, or must, be falsely understood by the questioner. We are all well acquainted from our own experience with that or some similar conduct. But we call it not morality, as the Church of Rome does, but sin. Between thee and thy neighbour all must be transparent. We ought to perceive the moral necessity of that maxim, and to attune our words to it. The Catholic, on the contrary, is allowed to speak truth like the woman Anna—that is to say, in such a way as to feel himself safe so far as the commandment goes, and yet to afford his neighbour the opportunity of deceiving himself.

§ 26. *Such morals set a premium on sharpness and insincerity instead of on inward purity.*

Anyone who has a head on his shoulders will not find it excessively difficult to fulfil the Catholic requirement of truthfulness and yet at the same time to deceive others. Of course the man who is specially ingenious in

equivocations will come off best. According to this conception of morality such a man can remain morally unimpeachable, while another who has the same disposition, but is somewhat less clever, will, before these judges, be held sinful for his fault. They know the command of morality as a limitation which someone else has imposed upon them, and which they, if they would travel safely, are bound to respect. But they do not know it as their own perception on which they ought to take their stand, and to take one's stand on which makes one inwardly clear-sighted and pure. And of another thing this Church knows just as little; and that is, that a man behaves morally only by obeying, without any reservations, whatever he himself recognises as unconditionally right. What Rome calls moral obedience is giving way before a power which can, it is true, exert compulsion on beings spiritually unstable, but can never convince a *man*. Such an obedience is not a *true* and sincere obedience. This

reason alone, then, is enough to prevent Catholic morality from grasping the notion of truthfulness. It is itself untrue.

§ 27. *The chief point in Gury is not the bad advice but the theory of morals it rests on.*

It is possible indeed, or actually certain, that many of our Catholic fellow-countrymen do not approve of the way in which the woman Anna acts. Perhaps even Cathrein himself is secretly indignant at his fellow-Jesuit, who can openly call such an action blameless. But the worst thing about the woman is not the way in which she deceives her husband. The worst thing is rather the moral standard for the sake of which she takes such pains — the Roman Catholic standard of morality.

§ 28. *That theory requires no perception of the justice of moral principle, and no virtuous disposition.*

She means to act rightly by fulfilling a

rule on which, as she thinks, her salvation depends. That is a Catholic view. But real morality consists in evincing by our actions the inward disposition of love to our neighbour—that is, in fulfilling a command the justice of which we have seen for ourselves. There is no trace of this inward disposition in the way in which the woman acts, since she thinks only of herself. She utterly deceives herself as to the fact that she is undone morally if she does not make it her endeavour to maintain between herself and her husband (who to her is her neighbour) a cordial fellowship, and therefore that, above all, everything shall be transparent between them. But truthful behaviour arising out of her own moral perceptions, or her own moral sense, is, on the Roman Catholic theory, not necessary. The Church itself releases men from this really moral duty. For it looks for moral goodness in an act the moral necessity of which the man does not perceive for himself—in which, that is to say, it is

not *his own* moral sense that expresses itself. But such an action is a sin.

### § 29. *The result is to do away with conscience.*

It might well be wished that the results of this corrupt morality had not as yet become clear to the Roman Catholic Church. It would then be possible to hope for her conversion, if it were once made evident to this degenerate branch of Christianity what comes of giving up the moral command the justice of which we see for ourselves. We gladly take for granted that Catholic Christians do not wish to be devoid of conscience. Such persons could surely be brought to see that if a man will not hold himself bound to obey whatever is clear to himself as being of unconditional necessity, the result is the annihilation of conscience. The sense of horror in the Roman Catholic Church at a spiritual void of this kind would inevitably become

a peremptory stimulus to the reform of that Church.

### § 30. *Rome recognises that result, and provides her 'Probabilism' to meet it.*

The Roman Catholic Church has precluded that. She has recognised very clearly that a man whose morality accords with her teaching reaches a condition of spiritual dependence. But for the loss of conscience which results from that, she has found room in her Christianity. This astounding outcome of her morality the Roman Catholic Church has shown to be a fact by the theory to which she gives the name of 'Probabilism.'[1]

[1 On Probabilism see Pascal's *Provincial Letters* (1656–1657), especially Letter V. (M'Crie's trans.: Edinburgh, 1851, pp. 116–131). And, on the Jesuit side, Cathrein, *Moralphilosophie*, Freiburg, 1890, vol. i. p. 353, where a distinction is drawn between Tutiorists, Probabiliorists, Aequiprobabilists, and Probabilists, who, in case of a doubtful rule of the Church, advocate its neglect, if the opposite view admits of certain various degrees of uncertainty or probability. His fundamental maxims are: "Lex non promulgata non obligat" and "Lex dubia non obligat."]

§ 31. *The early error of restricting morals to outward acts was rejected at the Reformation, but approved by Rome.*

Even from the second century onwards in the Christian Church the error is to be detected that the moral law does not apply to the inward disposition, or does not lay claim to the whole man, but only prescribes individual actions. Wherever this error prevails, there is, of course, no recognition of the truth that each individual must recognise for himself the unconditional necessity of what is commanded him in morality. For we can perform individual actions without understanding the justice of the command that requires them. But, on the other hand, if the command of morality is to be an expression of our own moral sense, then we must obviously have an insight into the rightness of that commandment. This understanding of the absolute justice of what is enjoined by morality we call conscience. In the Church, which takes the name of Him who made the conscience free,

there has existed from primitive times the danger of a man's suppressing his own conscience on the supposition that only individual actions are enjoined on him, in the performance of which the conscience does not come into the question at all. As soon as this danger was recognised, either this false representation of the command of morality had to be supplanted by the true one, which was there in the New Testament, or else the decision had to be made to approve this suppression of the conscience. The Reformation did the former; the Roman Catholic Church did the latter. And Probabilism, above all else, has served as her instrument for this end.

§ 32. *Cases where conscience deliberates Rome calls 'doubtful,' and teaches men in these to disobey conscience.*

For us it goes without saying that a moral determination is the translation of our own moral sense into act under special circum-

stances. We arrive at such a determination always after the more or less severe effort of considering how in this definite case the unchangeable content of our moral sense is to be adhered to and to be carried into action. Wherever the Roman Catholic Church leads men, all this is altered. It is at this point that she exhibits her great skill in making the simplest things complicated and the clearest obscure. What she says is that there are doubtful cases in which a man does not need to follow his own moral discernment or his conscience. Now it is evident that all cases which admit of a moral determination remain doubtful as long as that moral act of considering has not come to an end. A hesitation of this kind fails to occur only when the case in question has been solved for us by previous decisions. But every moral determination which involves progress on our part moves through similar moments of an uncertainty from which we have to make an effort to free ourselves. Sometimes our act of determina-

tion will not be quite free from a certain doubt whether we did not give too little weight to considerations which pointed in a different direction. But still the decision can be given only by our own moral sense and by the moral discernment which we have fought for and acquired. Both of these are heard in the voice of our conscience. It is by that that we have to be guided. If we make a mistake in the means we take to give actual expression to the right moral sense, even then we have fulfilled the law. For we have acted according to our best knowledge and conscience.

§ 33. *Instead they may follow their confessor or any one notable Church teacher they may find convenient.*

Whoever thinks of this subject must see that in those innocent-looking words[1] the Roman Catholic Church offers a most objectionable piece of advice. What she says

[1] See above, § 32: "There are doubtful cases in which a man does not need to follow his own moral discernment."

amounts to this, that in each fresh moral decision, by which we ought to make spiritual growth, we do not need to follow our own moral perceptions. The question, then, naturally arises by what the Christian ought to direct his steps in doubtful cases, which means at bottom in every moral decision. The answer runs: By the judgment of his father confessor, but also by the judgment of other teachers of note pronounced on similar cases. Now, of course, the effect of these judgments of ecclesiastical teachers often differs very widely. So one might think that this advice might possibly only increase the perplexities of a man who was trying to find his way. But the Catholic Church knows a plan to meet that difficulty; for she tells her Christians they are at liberty to seek out for themselves the decision they find most convenient. They have only to be guided by some defensible opinion (*opinio probabilis*)—that is, by one which is defended at least by some one ecclesiastical teacher of note. Jesuit theo-

logians, therefore, of the highest repute see the will of divine providence shining out from the multifariousness of the views of ecclesiastical teachers to make the yoke of Christ pleasantly light to the Christian. It is certainly a great lightening of it for every man who wants to escape from his own conscience, or to be unconscientious. For to the Catholic Christian his Church expressly gives the right to be at liberty to follow the judgment of one ecclesiastical teacher of note, even when, according to his own moral judgment, he holds the opposite view to be more correct, and knows as well that other ecclesiastical teachers are equally to be found defending that opposite view.

§ 34. *Restriction to 'doubtful cases' does not alter the practical fact of advice given to disobey conscience.*

It is indeed always added that it is only in doubtful cases that the Christian may proceed on these lines. But, then, is not every earnest

decision, in which a man advances beyond his earlier attainments of moral insight and strength, won through conflict with many doubts? And in any case does not the fact remain that the Catholic Christian is *invited* by his Church to act contrary to his own moral discernment? It is not merely that in certain of the Church's members loss of conscientiousness is developed out of principles of hers that they have perverted, but the point is that the Church herself places herself with all her authority at the head of that development. She gives the invitation to unconscientiousness.

§ 35. *Many Protestants hold the theory of morals which leads to this astounding immorality.*

It is a most remarkable phenomenon that a Church which claims to be founded by Christ, and which heaps all honours on His name, should come to such an end as this. It seems inconceivable that men should

honour Jesus Christ and at the same time should be able to kindle themselves to enthusiasm for such an immoral, and therefore godless, piety. But many Protestant Christians as well will not regard the beginning of this end as anything evil, but will, with a light heart, become parties to it. That beginning is, in fact, to be sought in the way they understand the idea that the command of morality is God's command. The Church of Rome thinks—and I suspect many Protestant Christians think so too—that partly in the fundamental characteristics of our human nature, partly in special revelations by speech and writing, God has given us laws which we are not at liberty to infringe; that in loyally endeavouring to keep these commandments moral goodness consists. But Jesus required of His disciples another righteousness [1] (Matt. v. 20).

[1 Matt. v. 20: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."]

§ 36. *The Reformers distinguished between 'civil' and 'spiritual' righteousness.*

To obey laws which have been imposed upon us we hold, indeed, to be very necessary. But if we are acquainted with no other righteousness than that, we do not know what moral goodness is. The State, as is well known, requires of its citizens an obedience of that kind. It is an immoral act, speaking generally, to refuse it; but to perform it comes short of making a man moral. We must be able to distinguish between morality and conformity to law. Roman Catholic Christianity cannot draw this distinction. Beginnings in the direction of this distinction existed in profusion even before the Reformation. The Reformers carried these beginnings further by distinguishing between 'civil' and 'spiritual' righteousness. For by the latter term they understood heart righteousness, the real moral goodness, in the possession of

which man is united with God[1] (Matt. v. 44, 45).

§ 37. *Rome conceives of morality as obedience to law in a theocratic state; but State law cannot be supreme in conscience.*

But, in opposition to the Reformers, the Roman Catholic Church has exalted to the position of a fundamental principle that very imperfection of view which the Middle Ages was labouring to overcome. She understands by morality obedience to law in a theocracy. Thus, while Catholics, like ourselves, speak of God's commands, yet their attitude to those laws is like that of citizens to the law of their country. But if that is once conceded, then even Probabilism, which is unconscientiousness based on principle, seems completely free from objection. For the law of a State (speaking

[1 Matt. v. 44, 45: "Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."]

generally, any law that has only been imposed on me by another) is not supreme in my conscience. I am urged by my conscience in a general sense to obey the State; but I do not act unconscientiously if I assert my spiritual independence as against individual laws of the State, or if I try to come to a compromise with those laws as far as I can. I never dream of risking my whole existence for the extension of these particular ordinances throughout the world.

§ 38. *This treatment of God's law ignores the Sermon on the Mount, as Cathrein proves.*

Now this is exactly the attitude which the Roman Catholic Church adopts towards the moral law as well, and by that she shows us that she does not yet know what is meant by moral law or a moral sense. She is called a Christian Church. But she keeps both herself and the nations, whom she previously educated and has now laid in chains, firmly fixed at a pre-Christian stage of moral and social progress.

As far as she is concerned, the Sermon on the Mount was never uttered. The notion entertained within her of man's attitude to the moral law is betrayed by Cathrein in the following words: "Man is by himself alone the master of his own actions; freedom of self-determination has been conferred on him by God. Any limit which anyone wants to set to that freedom, or, what is the same thing, any law which anyone wants to impose on him, must be supported by positive proof. So long as that proof is not produced, a man may move freely."[1] He is of opinion that even Probabilism is justified by these propositions, the correctness of which seems to him to stand beyond all doubt. For our part we have no desire whatever to combat that view. If man is really so related to the moral law as is there stated, then that unconscientiousness based on principle, to which the Church

[1] Cathrein, *op. cit.*, i. 368. In the third edition this sentence is wanting; but the representation contained in it of the relations between law and freedom controls his whole treatment of the subject.

of Rome relinquishes herself by her doctrine of Probabilism, is morally correct.

§ 39. *And treats divine law as an unwelcome limitation put upon our natural freedom.*

In his own words the command of morality is expressly termed a limit set to the freedom of man. The orders of the police have a similar significance for us. If the citizen respects those limits, he can serve his own private interests in everything besides. His civil freedom will be the greater in proportion as it is the less narrowed by police regulations. To enjoy this freedom from the law is the citizen's cherished right. That is all plain sailing. So far, we are assured that we are at one with the Roman Catholic citizens of this country. But now that relationship between the law and a man's freedom is carried over by the Roman Catholic Church into the moral sphere as well. According to her, the man is to feel himself free as regards whatever is not definitely specified by the

*moral* law. He ought, that is to say, to have a right in certain definite respects to enjoy his freedom from the moral law as well. But in that case this law is evidently no more the expression of his own moral sense than is the State law. Then he regards even the moral law as a chain laid upon him, which he bears because he must, but which he would rather not bear. But whoever adopts that attitude to the moral law cannot be, in the Christian sense of the word, religious.

### § 40. *Reluctant obedience passes for morality with Rome; but we call it sin.*

The Catholic Christian who allows himself to be firmly held by his Church to this position of moral immaturity finds himself perpetually in inward opposition to God. For what he himself wishes to be is always something different from real goodness, since he feels the command of morality to be a limitation of his freedom. We, too, are acquainted with this feeling, but we call it sin. The Roman

Catholic Church, on the contrary, calls it morality, when a man so submits himself to the command of morality as to want to draw a distinction between the act of submission and the assertion and use of his liberty.

### § 41. *Probabilism is an apt defence of 'freedom' against duties inculcated by conscience with increasing clearness.*

To a 'morality' like this it must of course be incomprehensible how Probabilism can be regarded as anything else than an invaluable assistance in the moral conflict.[1] For if we have a right to regard the moral command as a chain and a limit upon our freedom, then we have also a right to defend our freedom against this compulsion. And Probabilism is a very apt instrument of self-defence against

[1] Cathrein (*op. cit.*, i. 369) expresses none too elegantly his indignation at the misconception of Probabilism. "That is the whole secret of Probabilism, which has been so howled at, and which since the days of Pascal, that great calumniator of the Jesuits, has so often had to do duty against them as a bugbear."

the command of morality. The Church of Rome maintains this defence of freedom against the requirements of morality under the legal axiom: A doubtful law, *i.e.*, one not clearly pronounced, does not bind us. That is to say, this case of a doubtful law is always to present itself whenever important considerations argue against a duty which is beginning to be clear to us. We need not waste time over the disgraceful fact that the decisions of ecclesiastical teachers of note are named among reasons of importance, such as may absolve us of a duty which is becoming clear to ourselves. The chief point is that the bare existence of doubts accompanying our moral judgment is to give us the right not to obey our own ethical perceptions. Although in our estimate of probabilities these perceptions assert themselves in opposition to the doubts, yet we are to be justified in not obeying the demand of duty which arises out of them, but acting upon our 'liberty,' that is, our appetite (*cf.* p. 298).

§ 42. *The error arises from regarding moral law as imposed from without only, and not by our own moral judgment.*

All that is right, if the command of morality, while it is God's command, is not at the same time the law which we ourselves set ourselves. In passing judgment on such a command and its requirements no other standards than legal ones are necessary, and it is legally unimpeachable if in defence of our liberty against such a command we fall back upon the principle of law that any limit we are to acknowledge must be laid down by a declaration entirely free from doubt. Even our own suspicion that God may possibly have laid down this limit does not alter the case in the least. For, as Romanist theologians plead in this legal battle between man and the law of God, God gave us our freedom too. That indubitable fact is not to be set aside by a notion not free from doubts, that God *has* imposed upon us the particular limitation which at the moment seems to oppose our wishes. Therefore we

are at liberty to get rid of this idea, so soon as weighty doubts arise against it, and to follow our own wishes. We may do that even when it appears to us more probable that God may indeed have imposed on us the duty about which we have our doubts. It is thus the Roman Catholic Church argues, and quite rightly too, if the rule holds good that the moral command is imposed on us by God, *and therefore from without.* But we need no proof that it is thoroughly immoral to be ready to be turned about in such a fashion in regard to a requirement the rightness of which is supported by our own moral perceptions.

§ 43. *The outcome of Probabilism therefore disproves Rome's sense of the maxim "Moral law is God's law."*

So, then, the idea out of which a usage like this has grown must be false, the idea that the moral command has been given us by God *and therefore from without—i.e.*, not by means of our own perceptions. From the

moral impurity in which such arts as Probabilism flourish, we escape only when it becomes clear to us that the command of morality cannot be given us from without at all. Whatever is imposed on us like that, binds us only outwardly. The command of morality, on the contrary, which lays claim to our heart of hearts, to ourselves, must present itself to us as the expression of our own moral sense, of our own independent perceptions. The beginning of real morality, therefore, lies for every man in his beginning to live freely on his own initiative; that is, not to follow the desires which enslave him, but to obey what he himself recognises as unconditionally necessary; in other words, as good. Before his Judge no one will deliver him if he refuses obedience to his own moral judgment, as the Roman Catholic Church allows him to do. In the comfortable bondage which in the Church of Rome passes for morality, he is in the service of evil. For a man serves the good only when with unhesitating sincerity

he follows what he himself recognises as absolutely necessary, that is, as good. The free personality independent in its moral perception is good. Nothing else is.

§ 44. *Rome's acceptation of it rests on a false idea of God, which vitiates her boasted piety.*

Against these principles the Roman Catholic Church calls into the field her piety. If we call what our own perceptions prescribe to us, the only moral command given us, then she reproaches us with the impossibility of our being any longer Christians, because we give up the fundamental principle that the command of morality is God's command. If we affirm the existence of an immoral piety in the Church of Rome, she discovers among us a godless morality. But a Christian whose thoughts turn to his God will not let himself be frightened by that. The moral command, of course, *is* God's command. But our God does not give us His orders like a policeman, but as the Father and Lord of Spirits. For

that reason his command does not present itself to us as something foreign. It is so given to us as to constrain us in our inmost being. But it does so only if we ourselves understand the truth of it: that is to say, if our own sense of perception compels us to prescribe it to ourselves. So long as we fancy that when we are confronted by ordinances of God we may have, and may assert, a certain independence, we have before our eyes, not the omnipotent God but an idol. So if the morality of the Roman Catholic Church is immoral, her piety is also godless.

§ 45. *Jesus met this very error in Pharisaism.*

Jesus knew this way of thinking, but He fought against it as "the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees." He wished to lead His disciples out from the service of unintelligible rules, and to set them on their own feet. He saw that obedience of the former sort is a huge self-deception on the part of any man to whom dying comes easy, and to whom

nothing is harder than to be really alive. To the servant of rules, who thinks he has fulfilled all God's commands, He says that he can become perfect only by a determination prescribed to him in no rule.[1] But Jesus did not mean by that, as the Catholic exposition has it, that in order to be perfect a man must do something more than the command of morality requires of him. The perfection of a man, according to Jesus' teaching, consists in the simple fulfilment of the command of morality (*cf.* Matt. v. 48[2]). The view of Jesus, then, is *that a man does not fulfil the moral command of God till he imposes on himself something which he does not find written in any rules.*

## § 46. *He gives no code of rules, but leads us to free moral convictions.*

Jesus is not of the opinion that we are already acting rightly when we are willing to

[1 Mark x. 17–22 = Matt. xix. 16–22 = Luke xviii. 18–23.]

[2 Matt. v. 48: "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."]

fulfil the commands of another, nor even when we think we have received the commands of Jesus Himself. Therefore he has given us no commandments at all that can be obeyed without further consideration. What sounds like a command on His lips is always only a stimulus urging on the disciples to make clear to themselves what they ought to do. For Jesus knew that a man is truly alive and spiritually united to God only when he acts from his own free conviction, that is to say, when he is true, and does not act a part.

§ 47. *There may be a blind obedience resulting from trust in God, whom we know, but not blind obedience to mere external precepts.*

Certainly Jesus did also require blind obedience, and practised it; for instance, in His patient and cheerful submission to the lot appointed Him by God. We render blind obedience to God, if we hold fast to the truth that it is just from the circumstances in which we are at this present time placed that eternal

life is to spring for us. Such blind obedience we have to practise every day, not allowing ourselves to be dragged down by our distresses and worries, but holding by the conviction that they were meant to lift us upwards. But we can achieve that only if the spiritual Power has revealed itself to us, filling us with complete confidence; that is to say, if we have found God.

§ 48. *But trust in God, whom we know, implies the possession of independent moral convictions.*

We must know God as the only one who has a right to be supreme and to claim our confidence, if we are to render Him a blind obedience. We can indeed make up our mind to believe what others say about Him. But to know Him Himself as the Lord over all, or as the spiritual Power which constrains us to complete trust, is given to that man only who himself knows what is really good. For it is only a man possessed of such independence who is capable of the movement of soul in

which we can be conscious of the nearness of God, of complete spiritual submission. Whoever is not able to say to himself what is unconditionally necessary and eternal, or good, remains in his heart of hearts hard and impervious. For him there is no revelation of God, because it is an experience of complete submission. So only the man who in his moral perceptions is independent can experience God's revelation of Himself to him, because he alone can bow to Him in an obedience without reservation.

§ 49. *Faith is consistent with independence of moral judgment, for Jesus taught His disciples both at once.*

Among the Reformers, therefore, the two things stand side by side, a trust in God (which is taken to be the whole of religion) and the independent conscience, the consciousness of knowing for oneself what values are to rank as eternal. But in this they were re-discovering what Jesus had imparted to

His disciples. Christians ought to be above the convenient, but also anxious and unsafe, religion which consists in being occupied with other people's ideas, getting accustomed to them, or turning them into laws. Those whom Jesus attaches to Himself get in His personality the fact which becomes the most powerful revelation of God to themselves, and which opens their eyes to other facts in which God comes near to them. But they get that experience only by becoming partakers of the moral sense of Jesus. Otherwise they can neither understand Him nor perceive His greatness. Nor can they otherwise experience His revelation of God in such a way as to make God supreme within them. But what is meant by partaking of the moral sense of Jesus is to be seen most plainly by the requirements which Jesus makes of His disciples. All these commands of His can be obeyed only by a man of whose own volition they are the expression: obeyed, that is, not outwardly, or with a blind obedience, but freely and from an

inward motive. Before all else they require of us the single duty of being independent men, constrained in our inmost souls by our own moral perceptions.

§ 50. *Christ's requirements cannot be fulfilled by external acts alone;* e.g., *that of turning the other cheek.*

To give up entirely the struggle for honour among men; to be ready for unlimited acts of forgiveness for all vileness; to renounce all revenge, even showing oneself willing to suffer further insults from the insulter—he, it seems, is no Christian who is not *able* for that. To love one's neighbour as oneself—that is to say, to set all one's hope in life on attaining hearty and spiritual fellowship with the persons whom circumstances have placed near us—he is no Christian who does not *do* that. But if we examine for ourselves this series of requirements made by Jesus, the first thing which strikes us is that they can be fulfilled only by one who has them living in his heart

as the object of his own will. If, for instance, Jesus had required nothing more than that, on being struck by a malicious person, you should declare yourself ready to receive further blows, of course that would be easily fulfilled. A person who imagines he can earn salvation by such conduct will not find it so very hard to allow that, or any other dirt, to stick to him. But by that command[1] Jesus asks for something quite different. You may easily allow yourself to be repeatedly struck and yet be all the time bitterly resenting it and wishing evil to the offender. But we are not to let ourselves be drawn into opposition to the offender. The Christian is to stand to such an evildoer in a relation of spiritual freedom; he is not to allow himself to be forced by him into a longing for revenge, but he is to feel himself so united to him as to be ready even to suffer still further at his hands. What

N.B.

[1 Matt. v. 39: "Resist not him that is evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." *Cf.* Luke vi. 29.]

Jesus requires is not the weakness of a person who sets no value on himself, but the highest superiority and strength. But this superiority of goodness towards an offender can evidently be evinced only by a man to whom the moral necessity for such behaviour has been so disclosed that his moral sense is filled with it. The will so to act must arise in himself; that is, he must be subject in his inmost soul to what the command requires. It is just the same with all Jesus' other requirements. But there is yet another thing which strikes us in them. The reason why they require listeners possessed of moral independence is that they leave it to us to distinguish between what ought to be done always and what is required of an individual in certain definite circumstances only. We ought always to be filled with the disposition out of which springs readiness of mind to bear further indignities from the offender. On the other hand, we are by no means to exhibit that readiness in every case. Without doubt we are not to

exhibit it when it would not be an expression of love to our neighbour (which is an exhibition of strength), but weakness or outward obedience to a mere rule. But this distinction is not indicated by a single word in that requirement of Jesus. And yet it is certain that He who fought against nothing so vehemently as the divided state of mind of insincere men, never wished to entice others by words of His into a mere external doing. So, then, in His saying about the right and left cheeks He counted on men who were already fully developed in moral independence, and who could therefore distinguish between the disposition unconditionally required of them, and a certain expression of that disposition which can be required only under definite conditions. Open as it is to that misunderstanding, this saying, like many others, is dropped with manifest unconcern into the movement which in history took its rise from Jesus. To us it is a proof that God wills that we should fight our own way to moral

independence. We are to submit ourselves completely to the power of Jesus' personality. But if we really do so, we shall observe that He repels us if we wish to submit ourselves to Him without following our own convictions. For He wants to win His own disciples to Himself by training them to be inwardly stable, really earnest, in other words, free men.

§ 51. *Spiritual union with Jesus brings liberty, independence, and a sense of wealth, which produce glad service of others.*

On the one hand, Jesus utters with wonderful impressiveness the truth that to know Him and to become spiritually united to Him is emancipation for a man. But in His whole person there speaks quietly but powerfully the intense purpose that with Him those only should go who let themselves be trained to become independent beings, that is, personalities. In His view it is the independent free man alone who is won for God, the man

who has become so rich and strong and free that he desires for himself nothing better than *to serve*. This force, bursting up from the seed that Jesus sowed, is the true beginning of salvation in a man. But really to live for others, or really to serve, is possible to us only when the hope that we have received enough to last for eternity is continually burying all our anxieties out of sight. That hope flows into the heart of those who are united to Jesus Christ. We do not fail to note that He is the conqueror.

§ 52. *Souls lacking this independence Christ may receive and lead on, but what of a Church which for selfish ends rejects it?*

Jesus did not turn away those who were under age. Therefore He would not judge harshly all the Christians who accept His sayings, and other sayings in the Bible, as rules which they would like to follow without understanding the truth of them. But He would inexorably reject a Church which for

the sake of maintaining its own position wants to keep men firmly fixed at that stage of moral immaturity. It is natural and excusable for childishly immature persons not to perceive as yet in God's commands the requirements of spiritual independence, or truthfulness. But when they outgrow this stage, they receive the divine impulse to put away childish things. If they obey God, they put away, if not the whole of Catholicism, yet certainly the Catholic conception of morals.

§ 53. *The revolt distinguishable in Catholicism affords little hope of its return as a Church to Christ.*

That such a development is in process in Catholic Christendom is made evident by such men as Alban Stolz,[1] or as Rosegger

[1 Alban Stolz, born 1808, died 16th October 1883. Professor of Pastoral Theology (R.C.) at Freiburg 1848–1880. Collected works, Freiburg, 1871–77. Author of an annual religious calendar, "For Time and Eternity," widely disseminated in his district, from 1843 onwards. Works, 19 vols. Freiburg, 1871, etc. Life, 3 vols., 1889.]

and his peasants.[1] It is proved, too, by many excellent things said in Cathrein's *Moral Philosophy*. But we are scarcely at liberty to allow ourselves the hope that the Roman Catholic Church can work itself free from its moral slough, and find its way back to Christ.

### § 54. *For Liguori's morality has been bound upon that Church by 'infallible' popes.*

She is prevented from doing that by the inheritance bequeathed to her by Pius the Ninth. The popes are now, in their quality of teachers of the Church, infallible. That pope, an exceedingly weak man as regards Christian sagacity, nominated Liguori[2] (the

[1 Petri Kettenfeier Rosegger, an Austrian author of very many short stories and poems exhibiting peasant life in the Styrian Alps. Thirty vols. of select works from his poems and stories were published in Vienna 1881–1894. Two, "The Forest Schoolmaster" and "The God-Seeker," are translated (Putnams, 1901), the former prefaced with a very brief autobiography. He is now a Protestant.]

[2 Alphonse Liguori, born 1696, died 1787, of noble family; educated at Oratory of S. Philip de Neri, Naples. Brilliant advocate; lost a case by sheer carelessness in 1725, and the distress drove him to a monastery; he was

founder of the Redemptorist Order, who had already been canonised) to be a "Teacher of the Church Universal," and by that nomination he pronounced the conception of morality represented by him and his Order and culminating in Probabilism to be the model conception. That has now become the door which shuts Romanist Christianity into its Inferno. Nevertheless it would be burst open if the remnant of Christian character in that Church were to gather its strength for a reformation from within.

### § 55. *To help such a revolt we too must be free from Romanist 'faith.'*

That is our hearty desire. Against the prison doors of these Christians many emotions

agent of Propaganda in Naples 1725–32; founded Order "for service of the poorest and most degraded souls" 1732; Bishop of St. Agatha 1762; resigned bishopric 1775 as poor as he came to it; canonised 1836. Works 16 vols. 8vo and 12mo, Paris, 1835; chief subjects the mystery of the Mass and the worship of the Virgin Mary. Life by Giatini, Rome, 1815; by Jeancard Cono, 1826. (Mainly from Wetzer and Welte.)]

are beating which have been implanted in them by the culture and civilisation of her peoples. They are visibly beginning to feel how intolerable it is that their Church is less and less in a condition to live among the living forces of history. The undeniable withering of the Catholic nations is forcing upon them the question whether the Church of Rome may not be responsible for it, seeing that in these millions of men of the richest natural endowment she carefully keeps down the beginnings of an independent moral life, so that they may die happy on her bosom. We would fain see the nations who are not willing to renounce a future in history preserved from this fate. But, if that is to be, there is nothing of such pressing necessity as a war against the Romanist conception of morals, which keeps down in men all that gives them a future — their independent conscience, their courage to prove themselves right, the energy which desires not merely to get through, but to effect something. But

the understanding of morals, which came into the world with the prophets of Israel and was brought to perfection in Jesus, has been encroached upon in many directions even within the circle of Protestant nations. If we wish to help our brothers in Roman Catholic bondage, we must overcome among ourselves this apostasy from the principles of the Reformation. But that will be achieved only if the Protestant Church resolutely separates itself from faith of the Catholic kind, which among us, too, is cherished, partly out of anxiety, partly out of indolence. We must get an insight into the fact that a determination to subject ourselves in matters of religion to the ideas of other people is not saving faith, but an act of that moral perversity from which God wants to save us. It must become thoroughly plain to us that the faith which saves a man is given him only when he seriously considers his own case for himself, and then under the influence of those evidences of the living God, which undoubtedly exist

for him in his own life, begins to be inwardly free and true. Whoever is following this road will find Jesus Christ too. For it is impossible that earnest men who simply seek along the lines of all that is strongest and kindliest in them for the truth in the midst of which they are set should in the long run fail to recognise that He is the truth. We may calmly await that issue in the case of all men who are, we trust, fighting the moral battle. God knows when their time will arrive. It is a violation of modest religious reserve to badger them with demands for faith with which they cannot yet comply. We ourselves should always in our actions, and as we have opportunity in our words as well, make known what and how we believe. But the forcing of others we should hate as we should the very devil.

§ 56. *Only thus can we lead the civilised nations to sincerity and progress.*

The future of the civilised nations depends, properly speaking, not on whether they get

free from Rome. But it does depend on whether they get free from what makes men untrue and so paralyses them morally. But nothing has so much to do with that as the fancy that we should be becoming religious and should be caring for our souls by adopting as our own the beliefs of other people. Religious tradition is indispensable for us. But it helps us only if it leads us on to listen to what God says to ourselves. Real faith consists in obeying this word of God. If, on the contrary, we favour the opinion that religious faith consists in the determination to pronounce true what for our own part we conceive not to be true, then we are responsible for the fact that among us, too, men become by means of their religion not humble, but proud; not infinitely willing to serve, but ready for violence; not truthful and free, but of Romanist morals. So, then, whoever among us would fain be a disciple of Jesus and is conscious of being in the line of succession of our Reformation forefathers, let him be

conscious also of his responsibility towards God and His people, and let him put away from him the Catholic kind of faith, which ultimately leaves every man to be engulfed in Roman Catholic morality.

# Appendix

## 1. *Two Replies by Adloff and Mausbach contrasted.*

There has reached me a Catholic reply to the foregoing observations, viz., "Dr Joseph Adloff: *Roman Catholic and Protestant Controversy about Morals. A Catholic Reply to a Protestant attack.* Reprint from the *Strassburger Diocesan-blatt.*" Since then a second has followed it.[1] I am delighted to have supplied the occasion for these publications. For in his gallant defence of his Church the author has found himself obliged to lend his

[1] *Catholic Ethics and Morality* ("Katholische Moral und Sittlichkeit"). A rejoinder to Prof. Herrmann's essay "Roman Catholic and Protestant Morality." By Dr Jos. Adloff. Strassburg, 1901.

support to the very position which every man of honour may clearly prove to himself to be immoral and must then reject with loathing. In his few pages he affords exhaustive proof that the Church of Rome must be on the verge of a reformation. I at least have no doubt that within her pale much that is genuinely Christian has maintained its existence, much honest moral enthusiasm and healthy trust in God. But this undying element in Rome's Christianity must rise in revolt, if the Church itself cultivates those seeds of evil—involved from the first in her conception of religious belief and of morality—till their flower unfolds itself in Probabilism, and then compels her priests to start up before all the world as the champions of such a piece of corruption.[1] That is certainly a

[1] I had assumed that when A. Liguori was nominated "Doctor Ecclesiae" Probabilism became the Church's doctrine. In that I had followed the Jesuit Lehmkuhl, who says in his *Theologia Moralis*, ed. 7, 1893, p. 66: "Atqui ecclesia per plura saecula saltem toleravit, imo recentiore tempore in S. Alphonso positive approbavit

proof of her strength. But at the same time it has brought her to a point where this development can proceed no further, but must be broken off. When a professor at a seminary for priests, to avoid deserting his Church, is obliged to defend an abomination with as little hesitation as Adloff does, it is still allowable to hope that it at least causes some pain to the defender himself. But if once the pain of silencing the conscience for the Church's sake is felt by many, there already lies in that feeling the beginning of a reformation. There must then result either the Church's conversion, or, if that is pronounced impossible, the beginning of her dissolution. No product of history, however strongly compacted together, can maintain

doctrinam probabilismi. Ergo probabilismus debet esse licitus, atque id quod sequitur ejus axioma certum." Adloff contends that the Church is not bound in that way by the authority of Liguori. I therefore confine myself now to the fact that the Church of Rome commends Probabilism, and by doing so proclaims that she has no clear understanding of the distinction between good and evil.

itself in opposition to what is a permanent factor in history. The Romish Church has never found herself in a more difficult position than at the present time. She has not infrequently been able to draw a veil over an actual reversal of policy. For in the first place it was not difficult to pervert the meaning of an ecclesiastical decision, or to get it forgotten. But now Romanist morality will hardly find that possible with regard to Probabilism after it has been endorsed by the Pope. In the second place, it was formerly not difficult so to take the edge off the distinction between old and new in ecclesiastical practice as to prevent its being felt. But that, too, would scarcely be possible now, when the necessity for abandoning the Church's instructions would be seen to rest on the recognition of the fact that they constitute an inducement to evil. Nevertheless the Romish Church will have to accommodate herself to this bitter necessity, if she wants to count any longer as a moral force among

the modern civilised nations. In that case she cannot possibly submit to being defended as Adloff here defends her. But seeing that he defends simply the Church's own conception of ethics, the Church will have no course left her but either to restrict herself to the fellowship of those whose moral growth is stunted, or else to abandon these representations, which are no longer fit to appear among earnest-minded men. A far finer defence of Romanist morality has been put forth by Joseph Mausbach.[1] He avoids the coarser errors of Gury and Adloff. His conception of the essence of morality is the same as a whole, but he finds excuses for the dangerous consequences that naturally flow from it, as being links by which the Church attaches to herself those who are morally immature. With Adloff the *religio paganorum* is the place where he is at home. With Mausbach

[1] *Catholic Ethics: Its Methods, Principles and Problems* [Die Katholische Moral: ihre Methoden, Grundsätze und Aufgaben]. Ed. 2; Cologne, 1902.

it is a low level to which he condescends in order to render service. I regret the more that Mausbach is in so great a hurry to pass from the fundamental question I have here raised, and deals in detail with other controversial questions in which the Catholic conception can certainly be safeguarded, always on the condition that the fundamental ideas of ethics are left in a fog.

### II. *Adloff's claim that Rome's faith is personal conviction.*

Of course Adloff says that, in the view of a Catholic Christian, too, faith is a personal conviction. "The ideas contained in the Church's doctrine express the opinions of his own heart. Of course that is not to be understood as if he had himself brought the ideas into being in his own heart." But in these two sentences Adloff only corroborates what I had said. For if the Catholic Christian does not bring into being out of his own heart the ideas contained in the Christian doctrine

which he alleges that he 'believes,' then he plainly has in his heart other ideas which really express what he himself thinks. He has no right to say of the Church's doctrines that they express the opinion of his own heart. They are something foreign to him, and if he nevertheless says he holds them to be true, that can have no other meaning than that he wishes to say nothing against them for fear of endangering his salvation. According to our view in the case of such a person there is no question of real faith, but at most of imagining that he believes. But this imagination rests upon an immoral course of action. For when, in spite of him, there forces itself upon him what according to his own inward grasp of it he cannot but hold to be true, he seeks ways of dulling this desire of his soul after sincerity. What wonderful means the Romish Church uses for this dulling process is betrayed by Adloff in the following sentences, which are intended ostensibly to express the rational basis of Catholic

belief. "He must be convinced that what Christ and the apostles teach is God's word. How will he reach this conviction except it be by having regard to the miracles and signs which Christ and the apostles wrought?" It seems to me beyond all doubt that no man who can lay claim to higher intellectual culture can be satisfied with so childish a consideration. Doctrines which according to his own admission he does not, properly speaking, hold to be true, he will all the same pronounce to be true, because the miracles and signs of Christ and His apostles prove the divine nature of their doctrines. But for all that, the question must arise in his own mind, whence he derives the certainty that the stories of these signs and miracles are true. He may silence that question by the use of historical arguments, but he is also conscious that these arguments can never afford him complete certainty. So if he makes up his mind in spite of that, that he is ready under cover of such a consideration to

pronounce those doctrines to be true, he arrives at that result only by suppressing in himself the tender beginnings of sincerity. In order to become a believer and afterwards to be saved some day, he deliberately deceives himself. The Romanist scholars, who are wont to complain of the intellectual backwardness of the Catholic people, should not delude themselves as to the cause which renders this phenomenon inevitable. Persons who are forcibly kept back under the influence of considerations such as that just referred to, may indeed develop great ingenuity in particular directions, but must, on the whole, become intellectually crippled. For to any intellect, which has been rendered clear by means of our schools, that way of proving credulousness to be rational must surely present itself as unworthy of any earnest man. If in spite of that a man allows such an intellectual pabulum to be forced upon him, spiritual ruin overtakes him. For intellectual growth is impossible to any one who ties

himself to what, as far as he is concerned, is dead.

III. *Are not the doctrines we believe given us by authority, and was not this the case with the faith of the great Fathers of the Church?*

Adloff does not know how to take these observations. He regards it as absurd to say that a Christian must himself bring into being the ideas of the Christian doctrines which are to be the expression of his own convictions. The *knowledge* of the truth, he admits, a man has of course to bring to being by his own investigations. But the truth itself he does not produce; in that he meets with something objectively given to him. That is the accurate expression for it according to the Romanist view. We are well aware of that. But all the same it is abundantly clear that the truth cannot be acquired like so much goods. Any matter of knowledge arising from perception becomes the personal property of that man

only who actually brings it into being as the expression he gives to his own perceptions. That which exists as truth for others I make my own only by myself bringing that matter of knowledge into being from the materials present in my own consciousness. Of course we are often guided by what others allege has come to their knowledge. We cannot get on without both giving and receiving such credit. In business matters it is so. But in religion it is otherwise; at least in real religion, which is to be distinguished from business. Mausbach has understood me to mean that I entirely reject the use of conceptions which are furnished to us by others. This arises from his detaching from their context my words:—"We should feel it to be a sin to treat as true a proposition the ideas of which are not our own ideas" (p. 103). They were written with reference to religious traditions. In that connection they are correct, because in religion it is only our own convictions that can help us, and because religious

faith is a state of mind. Mausbach had no right to bring up against me the fact that we often make use of conceptions relating to geographical, physical, or other subjects, although we could not ourselves bring them into being. That is obvious. But what Mausbach means in the genuine Romanist style is that what is true in this way for business matters is supremely true for religion. All the world, he says, has found the clearest distinction between faith and knowledge in the fact that in the case of faith the testimony of others takes the place of the reasons of a man's own intellect. He rightly appeals to men like Athanasius, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Bossuet, Leibnitz, and even to the Reformers, who all of them, as he says, required faith in supernatural facts on the testimony of others, and he asks me whether I really think these men were intellectual cripples. Well, of course, I do not. But if we nowadays—and I include Mausbach—want to do exactly as they did, then we are in danger

of becoming intellectually crippled. For in two directions we are placed in a different intellectual position from that of those men. We occupy a different position towards tradition, and we have a clearer consciousness of the peculiar nature of religious conviction and of its distinction from knowledge. But the consequence of that is that we are in danger of becoming insincere if we want to retain the conception of religious faith which in those men was natural and safe.

### IV. *The modern mind has changed its relation to authoritative tradition.*

For ancient Christianity down to the eighteenth century religious tradition consisted of custom, the maintenance of its use and wont. For living under this use and wont nothing further was needed than to know what the custom really was. This need, the Church alleged, she could satisfy, and, as a rule, she met with no opposition. But already in early times there are found rudimentary tendencies

towards a change of this practice. They show themselves in the emergence of a conception that tradition was a law, and that therefore faith was not merely use and wont but obedience. It was supposed to be self-evident that the tradition was to be followed, but people detected an element of compulsion in it. Then theology itself tried to make the compulsion easier, by making the contents of the tradition as easy for acceptance as she could, saying that the main part of it was rational, and that it was quite reasonable too that an irrational element should show itself joined with this main part in the doctrines as well as in the narratives of the tradition. This state of things prevails to the present day in the Roman Catholic Church and in its theology. That is the explanation of the comical bragging about logic and about proof carried "even to demonstration," which is to be found in Adloff alongside of the claim advanced with punctilious exactness that we must accept mysteries and mysterious doc-

trines.[1] With the Reformation a change came in. Even before that the Holy Scriptures had been distinguished from all other tradition as the highest law for believers. But the Reformers ventured to regulate by the Holy Scriptures all else that was a matter of custom in the Church. They even began to assail the fundamental principle that faith has to regard some tradition or other as an inviolable law. For they ventured to single out in the Holy Scriptures themselves what parts they were ready to be guided by, and to set other materials in the Bible on one side. At first, however, no further progress was made along this line. The Romanist spirit in Protestantism, as well as in the Romish Church, has resisted this attempt. In the ancient Church they set up the doctrine of the Church's office as infallible teacher. In the domain of Protestantism it was sought to

[1] The answer to his indignant question whether I allow no mysteries to have any value in religion is to be gathered from what follows [*cf.*, especially, § vi.].

accomplish the same end by means of the doctrine of Holy Scripture as the infallible word of God, in which case, of course, a two-fold need was very soon felt; the ecclesiastical courts had no infallible interpreters, and the interpreters had no infallible text. This Protestant doctrine had from the first to reproach itself with the fact that the Catholic doctrine had logical consistency on its side, and on the same side, of course, it could also be said there lay the greater power in the battle against the truth. But the Romanist principle which both the doctrines aimed at defending, viz., the inviolability of a tradition, has fallen before an irresistible movement in which an impulse given by the Reformation was worked out in the secular sphere, although it had not at first been able to make way in the Church. In the seventeenth century science arose in opposition to the mere logical working up of inherited notions. Since that time the discernment that only ideas brought into being by ourselves constitute our own know-

ledge has conquered the world. If Mausbach finds that principle a monstrous one, he has, it is true, Willmann and other Catholic philosophers on his side on that point. But he has against him science, which even the Catholic peoples cannot renounce. For science, as the incessant criticism of existing opinions, is the methodical working out in all directions of that very idea, and the progressive illumination of the consciousness by means of it. As a branch of this science in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, historical investigation has arisen, before which the Romanist theory of the universe has to go. For it implies the criticism of traditions. But this criticism does not by any means achieve 'irreversible' results, as Adloff asserts that Harnack alleges.[1] It even changes perpetually in its results, because

[1] P. 19. Here is a sample of Adloff's style, and of his conception of science: "The question as to the truth of the narratives of the miraculous, which forces itself on every thinking intelligence, is therefore not merely silenced by historical arguments, or suppressed, but with confidence decided in the affirmative."

it is only a partial expression of the consciousness, which aims at working its way out of the previous state of confusion. We can easily understand how even the Protestant Churches at first armed themselves against this force, and to some extent try to do so still. But, on the other hand, it is possible for them to withdraw from this conflict in which a Christian Church must perish as the price of victory. They can withdraw, because they are learning by degrees to understand religion. specially in the peculiar nature of its thought-structure, better than it could be understood by Augustine or by Thomas Aquinas.

v. *The modern mind has a better understanding of religion itself as not separated from life's realities.*

This new understanding of religion is the second thing which compels us to reject the authorities to which Mausbach refers us, although we understand and excuse them. Those great men knew how to give grand

expression to the truth that the lifting up of a soul to God is wrought by a revelation of God which each individual must experience for himself. This secret of religion we do not recognise merely as they did. We believe that we have still more accurately apprehended this kind of religion as a kind of individual experience, and have thought it out in its consequences. At the same time, in one important direction our notion of religion has taken quite a different trend. They thought that in order to come to God they must withdraw as much as possible from the world in which they themselves lived, and leave the direct road of their own perceptions. The world really was as godless as they thought, and the understanding as dark. But if religion is not to be allowed to expand by taking a vigorous grasp of what is undeniably real, it begins to degenerate into a mere piety of the imagination. For this reason it was not difficult for Christians in those days to allow notions to be forced upon them for

religion's sake — notions of which their own souls knew nothing whatever. The more strange these notions sounded to them, the more they excited the imagination, if only they had the appearance of being in some way or other connected with the tradition which was actually found by experience to be a source of religious strength. From that kind of piety ours is differentiated by consisting of independent thought. To us it is plain, as every earnest man who seeks God will ultimately acknowledge to himself, that we can find God only in the realities in the midst of which He has set us. If God is almighty, then He speaks to us through this real world. If, therefore, we do not want to get out of the way of the living God, we must think for ourselves what is our own experience of these realities, or what it is that we learn from all that this world contains; but also what, as the result of our own perceptions, we set before us as the aim of our existence and the law of our

conduct. But as soon as religion has recognised the way to God as lying in this impulse towards what is undeniably real and powerful, its attitude to all traditions, even to the Holy Scriptures, is altered at one stroke. Then the most important question for a man who is seeking God is, not what in the way of doctrines or narratives tradition offers him, but what it is that he himself is experiencing. On the other hand, tradition may gain in strength and meaning by this very process. The tradition, along with all that it carries with it, certainly ceases to constitute a custom to be followed as a matter of course; it ceases, above all, to be a dead law to distress a man, but it may become something much more powerful. That will be experienced, not, indeed, by every man, but by the man who views the Christian traditions from within, if he thinks seriously and, instead of revelling in imaginations and in mere unpractical ideals, will take to heart what is undeniably real. He cannot but observe that the personal Life

which presents itself to him in this tradition is distinguished from all else in his experience as something incomparably great.[1] We can apprehend this among the contents of Holy Scripture as a reality which touches us in the actual present, although we can by no means make it visible to others by any proofs that compel belief. To us, therefore, the personal Life which is revealed in the Holy Scriptures can be what the rest of its contents can never become to us, the ground of our trust in God.

VI. *Faith founded on Christ's life has independent perceptions not inferior to those of knowledge.*

That such an attitude to what has been handed down by tradition is possible for the Christian is a fact to the meaning of which far less importance has been attached than it

[1 By "personal Life presenting itself in Scripture" the author means the life of God seen above all in the life lived by Jesus Christ, an ideal life, and one making the essence of God's nature plain to us. Compare § 5, p. 108 f, § VII., and p. 90 f.]

deserves. To the Christian his sacred tradition may become more powerful when it loses the force of law. For that tradition is in reality the expression of a personal Life the touch of which makes us morally free. By this process the tradition becomes to us the most precious and the most powerful thing in the world, that will never be destroyed for us—of that we are convinced—even if in this sphere, too, historical criticism should discharge the duties of its office. Luther found the personal Life which spoke to him in the Bible to be a power for acquiring moral freedom. It is true he did not always maintain the attitude to the Holy Scriptures which naturally results from that. But he did find it, because in stern conflicts he made clear to himself the distinction between a religion of imagination or of caprice, and a religion of independent thinking or of sincerity. For if independent thinking is the way to religion, and if its commencement lies in the revelation experienced by each individual, then there is no

sense in wanting religion to be sustained by notions which rest only on the testimony of other people. Real religion cannot develop in the atmosphere of a faith which is inferior to knowledge in the independence of its perceptions. Of course that is what the Romish Church wants. Even by Mausbach her faith is so described that it absolutely cannot be counted at all as a man's own perception, but only as a ready acceptance of the value of notions put forward by others. But in real religion faith is not the worthless resolution to decline to say a word against the assertions of someone else. It is a conviction of our own the contents of which are to us at the same time both certain and full of mystery. From the revelation of God which we have experienced, our hearts derive the courage to think new and marvellous thoughts. By their means its substance becomes a reality to us; but at the same time it has a mysterious character by which faith distinguishes itself from knowledge. For

in the first place we are not in a position to include this reality in the same category with that of the world. Therefore we cannot demonstrate it to others. In the second place, by the very fact of its dawning upon us we become inwardly transformed to a new kind of life. For this reason the idea which grows up in this fashion within me—the idea that a God lives who wishes to deliver me—brings me face to face with an infinite mystery. On the other hand, the traditionary conception that a Romanist priest makes the God-man out of a piece of bread is of course just as much beyond my understanding as it is beyond that of Adloff or of Mausbach, but I cannot follow them in venerating it as a sacred mystery. It is a matter of indifference to me, inasmuch as I quite see that no man can produce that conception out of a heart made new by the revelation of God—that is to say, can be really convinced of its truth. On the other hand, it is not a matter of indifference to me, inasmuch as I perceive that

for others, owing to the influence of history upon them, it is indissolubly bound up with what is sacred. It certainly never occurs to me to want to disturb others if it gives them pleasure to carry such conceptions about with them. Only I must try to win them over, too, to know that religion itself is a more serious matter than taking pleasure in such 'mysteries.'

VII. *The influence of Jesus frees us from slavery to authoritative dogmas and from immoral suppression of our own convictions.*

Our Romanist opponents seem to be still very far from knowing that. Mausbach pronounces it to be a childish observation that God reveals Himself to us when the personal life of Jesus obtains power over us and produces in us the most profound disquiet and the most profound peace. Nevertheless the intellectual situation has altered for our opponents too. It cannot long be without influence upon them.

that now at last it is made plain to them too, how a living Christianity everywhere arises out of an experience which is accessible to every man who is morally awake and who has a connection with the tradition of Jesus Christ. Without a doubt, too, they will feel the profound distinction between a faith which is ready to adopt ideas foreign to it, and a faith which comprehends itself as a strength of personal conviction inwrought by God, and watches the growth within itself of wonderful ideas of things sacred. Catholics are, I admit, to be excused for resisting their perception of these things. For the meaning of them is not only that one or two of their dogmas are in need of correction, but that the whole of Catholic dogma is a wrong structure of ideas. The Christian Church ought not to compile doctrinal rules, but she should make clear to herself the ideas involved in her faith. The Christian is closed against dogma just so far as he is religiously alive. For the God who has revealed Himself to him tolerates no

arbitrariness. The difficulty is already being felt by those theologians of our time whose thinking has a Romanist tendency, that the indestructibility of external testimony, which they think they cannot do without, has in our times become a meaningless hyperbole. For as it is they have to conduct themselves as if they lived in a world which even for them, so far as they have a share in the progress of civilisation, is no longer in existence. But still worse than this difficulty is the fact that Christian faith, which is never without a suspicion that it ought to be a form of thought and therefore a conviction of one's own, has on the Romanist side to be taken as acquiescence in ideas that are foreign to it, that is to say, as the suppression of one's own convictions. And that is and always was immoral. But this immoral act could not as yet be felt to be immoral among the Christian apologists of the second century, or by Augustine and Thomas Aquinas; but among our contemporaries whose thinking has a Romanist tendency,

conscience must be galled by the fact that their religion hinders them from the serious recognition of realities which they themselves have comprehended; in other words, makes them insincere.

### VIII. *Mausbach's separation of morals from faith leads to insincerity in both.*

But Mausbach does not hold it to be permissible for me to connect the Romanist method of belief at all with the principles of Romanist morality. He is of opinion that on the one hand faith consists in a man's readiness to accept what is intrinsically foreign to him; that whoever is not prepared to do so is an unbeliever; that, on the other hand, in moral conduct we are concerned with the practical outcome of a man's own discernment. He expects to overthrow me with the observation: "Faith tells me what God is and what He has done for me; morality tells me what I myself

ought to do and to be. Therefore in the former, revelation stands in the foreground, but in the latter my own discernment."[1] Of course I grant him that we cannot make morality and religious faith in all respects parallel. Love of God and love of our neighbour are two kinds of activity of the Christian life which are quite distinguishable. But all the same that life itself is an indivisible unity. For this reason a belief without morals is just as impossible in the real life of a Christian as is the performance of moral duties without belief. Mausbach ought to admit that too. But in that case there is a terrible danger to the Christian nations in this degeneration of religion which is encouraged by the Church. This degeneration is at once introduced where the act of fleeing to God has lost the form of earnest independent thinking, the form of the inward concentration of thought upon the idea which is produced in our own minds of the eternal power of the

[1] Mausbach, p. 15.

benevolent Will. This idea, which makes the will sincere, or moral, also makes the belief sincere or religious. It is therefore wrong to place the solemn revelation, by which religion lives, in opposition to one's "own discernment" by saying that in the pious mind the former supplants the latter. The revelation in which we really participate is the fact, the discernment of which we ourselves achieve, that God lives and is near us. In sincerity, or in honest submission to the realities we ourselves have grasped, faith and morality are one. For this reason the disappearance of sincerity from one of the sides of life means the ruination of the other side as well.

IX. *This loss of sincerity is confirmed by Mausbach's defence as well as Adloff's, and is due to a misconception of revelation.*

This inference is confirmed by the principles which have been brought to maturity in Romish Christendom throughout the centuries. My Romanist opponents ought, however, to

recognise this about me, that I do not occupy myself with individual atrocities, which are equally detested by earnest Catholics; that neither do I enlarge on the simple superstitions commended by Leo XIII., but lamented by a part even of the Roman Catholic press in Germany; that, on the contrary, I keep to the principles which are reckoned in Romanist circles to be the distinctive honour of their Church. If I sometimes use hard words, I use them only against what I prove by means of logic to be evil. So I too will gladly emphasise the fact that the final paragraphs of Mausbach's book from page 113 onwards express in an attractive form ideas to which we, too, on the Protestant side ought to give profound consideration. I have shown already that I am prepared gladly to make concessions to Adloff too, where it is possible for me to do so. I wish it were oftener possible to let myself be taught by him. But what I have advanced on the subject of the principles of Romish Christianity is confirmed as fully by Maus-

bach's defence as by Adloff's. In the first point of chief importance Mausbach acknowledges the substantial correctness of my opinion, though he objects to my phrases. He acknowledges that in Romanist belief a man's own discernment is of less importance than a revelation which imparts to him new doctrines about God and eternity, doctrines which extend beyond what he himself knows. But surely it is when we live in accordance with the ideas which are true for ourselves that we are ourselves sincere. To this category belong the ideas defining the realities that are disclosed to our own consciousness. Thus any resolution to hold as true, doctrines which express no reality that we ourselves have grasped, cannot but render us insincere. Nevertheless 'believing' of this kind finds its way in among Christians. Its immoral character is overlooked, because it gives prominence to a far more important religious idea in a way that makes it very easy to understand, so that persons only half awake to the

issues, or even entirely irreligious, think they understand it. This idea is that the revelation of God discloses to us a reality which was entirely concealed from us before. Any doctrine which has the value of revelation tells us, so it is supposed, about a reality of this kind. But the more that people are morally awake, the less possible does it become for them to identify such an acceptance of other people's communications with a laying hold of those forces which only what is real can possess. If in other fields [1] we follow without hesitation the representations made to us by others, we do so with the tacit confession that even if the facts were actually different, we should not be able to raise any objections to them. If one of us knows nothing whatever of astronomy, he will usually be ashamed to say he knows nothing of what is imparted on the subject in the national schools. Yet in that case he

[1] Adloff says (p. 17) "even in the field of natural science"; he seems to mean that such an act is supremely in place in matters of religion.

will be of opinion that, as far as he is concerned, the sun may rotate round the earth if it likes. But as to what we *believe* in a religious sense we ought to be serious. For any one who is to be taken seriously that can only mean: I stand up for these ideas. With reference to them I do not say: As far as I am concerned the matter might be quite different; for these ideas are the outward expression of my own inward thought. A man's really earnest religious faith is identical with his thinking. When he gives utterance to the confession of it, he speaks of the reality which he himself by means of his inward thought sees with his whole soul. To speak in that connection of what others have told him, he would, on considering the matter a little, be obliged to reckon untruthful. For in that case it would not belong to his thinking as his own confession, but at most would be the confession of other people.

x. *The insincerity of 'confessing' what is not real to us is involved in Rome's conception of faith, and necessarily destroys sincerity all round.*

Mausbach abandons any sincerity of this kind in respect of religious belief. He could admit it only if he were ready to grant that the revelation of God does not consist of doctrines, but of facts experienced by ourselves, in which God actually unveils Himself to us, and by that means confers on His creature who was groping in the dark a new beginning of life for walking in the light. But no one who wishes to remain in the Church of Rome can give up the false conception that revelation consists of doctrine; while, on the other hand, it is equally true that it is not by his baptism, but by this particular error, that any Christian becomes a member of the Romish Church. Consequently there is no course left for Mausbach but to give up at once, as indeed he does, sincerity in regard to religious belief. But

this position (which in Rome is the correct one) with regard to the question of faith, in fact paralyses truthfulness all round. It is evidently impossible to say that uncompromising sincerity is to be abandoned in religious belief, but must be unconditionally followed in moral conduct. If we cannot help being impressed with the fact that honourable Roman Catholic Christians do nevertheless propose to say it, we shall also always observe that their religion is to them a kind of play, on which their heart may perhaps be ardently set, but which they distinguish from the serious conduct of life. It is utterly impossible for any man seriously to aim at being sincere in one part at a time. At each moment he is either altogether sincere or not sincere at all. In the case of a person who in order to secure salvation wraps himself up in ideas which have not taken their rise in his own inner self, a person who consequently interrupts the process of the illumination of his consciousness, and hinders the complete

formation of the conception which is labouring to grow up within him, there cannot be any question of his being at the same time sincere in regard to ethics. He has by this act utterly relinquished that sincerity which forms the manifest foundation of a really religious attitude and of all moral earnestness.

xi. *Protestants, in imposing dogmatic tests, are inconsistent, and are promoting the general religious indifference.*

Among us Protestants it should be easier to prevent this moral corrupting of our faith. But many, even among Protestant Christians, are zealous in assuring us that Christian faith should be an inward conviction, or, in other words, should be part of our thinking, and yet consider it necessary to demand *a belief in doctrines* which have not been grasped as true —that is to say, a belief which is the very opposite of an inward conviction or of our thinking. In many persons this contradiction

is, of course, connected with another fact, viz., that without cutting themselves adrift from the memory of the Reformation, they still do not free themselves from the characteristics of Romanism. But another thing tending to produce the same result is the hard conflict which present-day Christianity has to wage against one of the greatest evils of society, namely, against a stupid lack of religious reverence, which unnecessarily limits the life of those on whom it falls. In this conflict it is easy to exaggerate the significance of the doctrine still remaining in the Church, and to demand belief in it, whereas it is only religious reverence that ought to be asked for—that is, a mind seriously disposed to seek in this doctrine what will become manifest to itself as being true. Unfortunately in the Churches, simultaneously with the increase of this religious indifference, common-sense seems more and more to disappear. People lose the power to detect how much would be attained if we secured that attainable religious

reverence, and so with blind zeal they set up claims which would have been intelligible in the seventeenth century, but which now degrade the Church in the eyes of men of moral earnestness and expose it to the taunts of the irreligious.

### XII. *A mistaken fear of historical criticism contributes to this error.*

But there is another factor still which enters into the explanation of this unintelligent attitude of the Protestant Church. All religions which have their roots in a historical tradition are nowadays threatened by a danger which was unknown in earlier times. The science of history not only sweeps to one side the legends of the Church of Rome, it also renders insecure those historical records on which our faith would fain rely. The fact that this danger is severely felt in our Church, is something to be only glad of. But as a rule the method of warding off the danger is only a feeble imitation of the Romish Church.

Protection is sought in ordinances—that is, in the means afforded by law. Above all, faith itself is turned into an arrangement with which everyone can comply. In actual fact it is not difficult to render historical research innocuous by these means. For as soon as its results conflict with the statements which under the name of 'faith' have become a Church arrangement, they are rejected. Obviously everyone must reject them who wants to belong to a Church resting on arrangements of that kind. It is all quite clear. The government of the Church is carried on upon these principles, and the Christian people, so far as they do not adopt an attitude of religious indifference towards the Church, go on discerning more thoroughly that this is as it should be. But it is also plain that on these lines we have a feeble imitation of the Romanist Church life, just as lacking in moral foundation as that is, but far weaker in worldly forces. For we notice at the same time that the leaders of the Pro-

testant Churches cannot be brought to apply these plain principles without hesitation. The Christian people are certainly often not a little astonished at this lack of decision in so plain a situation. But I am of opinion that in this hesitation there is to be found a priceless relic of Protestant Christianity. Men can still see that it is morally impossible to save the Church from science by such methods. If, nevertheless, they are for ever grasping at the expedient of making faith into an arrangement which is to be superior to history and to historical inquiry, just as the Church of Rome claims that it should, that is certainly in many cases only an expression of the uttermost embarrassment. Even the cleverest people do not know how otherwise it is possible to ward off from the Christian Church the danger with which its foundations are threatened by the historical investigators. It is, in fact, not possible in any other way. But we are not to conclude from that, that we are to adopt this method. That is not true, because Christianity is never

to be rescued by vandalism and self-seeking. On the contrary, we should conclude that every defence against the danger is to be renounced. The Christian Church, as long as she is in the world, must bear with the fact that the very science whose unhindered activity she must herself advocate, if she is to keep a good conscience, is fraught with danger to her.

### XIII. *Faith founded on Christ's personality is superior to this fear of criticism.*

Only on one condition, indeed, can a Christian in this position remain calm and confident. He must be able to exercise trust that he will always continue to overcome the dangers which he cannot escape. No science can give him that confidence. But he wins it if in the personality of Jesus, as he himself meets with it in the traditional records, he himself experiences that he is met by the revelation of the very Spirit which lays compulsion on his inmost nature. From that point onwards we can view with composure all the attempts of

historical criticism. For in that experience there has been extinguished any possibility of our regarding the portrait of Jesus as the creation of men who longed for some such revelation of that Spirit. But if He Himself stands undeniably before us, then He becomes to us the most important factor in that reality which makes an impression on our hearts, and on which we meditate when we seek after God. Then by *His* strength we become free from our trouble. Only those who become in this way witnesses for the reality and power of the personality of Jesus belong to the Christian community. All others are still standing outside it. They cannot be helped by prescribing to them what they are to believe, or by any other external application; but they may be helped indeed if persons whose hearts have been thrilled by that experience show themselves kindly to them and serve them. It is not by any set of things supposed to be imperishable that Christianity continues to live on, but by

the fact that there are always persons to be found who by their contact with the Bible tradition become witnesses of the power of Jesus, follow Him as their guide, and therefore acquire sufficient courage to sacrifice themselves for others.

xiv. *This faith must give us power to expel the remnants of Romanism from our Churches.*

So then, while we can find excuses if the strength of Protestant Christianity in our Church is hampered and at the same time its profoundest difference from Romanist Christianity is obscured, yet we must labour to prevent this state of things from continuing. For this end it is before all things necessary at the present time for us to become as clearly as possible conscious of that in which all are fundamentally at one who inwardly belong to Protestant Christianity. We know that we are most profoundly differentiated from Rome by our determination to have no immoral Christianity, and therefore will not have any belief

which is not an independent conviction. But this determination evaporates in empty words if we are not conscious of that strength in which we have the advantage of the Romanists. Every Protestant Christian can himself find Jesus Christ, and can make clear to himself, as an experience of his own, how this personal Spirit not only attracts a man and uplifts him, but also bestows peace on those who hold firmly to Him. If our faith arises solely out of the power of personal goodness over our hearts, a power which we have ourselves apprehended, then there is nothing in such a faith that is not our own experience, and free conviction, and gratitude for the gift of God. In that there lies a strength which the Church of Rome lacks, and which is more than a match for all her arts.

xv. *The true reverence for and use of Scripture must be boldly taught from the pulpit in spite of excuses for silence.*

But from this too there springs the only real

reverence for the traditional records of the Bible. He who has in any way become conscious that by Holy Scripture as by nothing else he is brought into connection with the personal Spirit whom he is bound to obey and to whom he owes his freedom, will not be without reverence for Holy Scripture. It need not be held necessary, then, in our churches to prolong the life of a theology and an ecclesiastical method which commend to men, as the way of salvation, not thinking for themselves, but illusions and the suppression of the ideas which they really hold to be true. The decisive step of advance against these enemies of what is living must be taken in preaching and in the Church's instruction of the people. For numbers of theologians keep to the wrong attitude towards the traditional records, because the Church lacks either the discernment or the courage to tell its people the truth on this matter. But the truth is to this effect: "You ought not to believe in the traditional records of Holy

Scripture in the sense in which you are in the habit of employing the word 'believe,' but you ought to make use of them. To this you are invited by the testimony of the Christian community, to the effect that in these traditions there may be found by you that personal Spirit who can create sincere belief in all who are seriously in earnest about Him." In the Protestant Churches expression is not often given to this truth, on the supposed ground that the people must be protected. But the people are not protected by that, but made defenceless and led into temptation. For if Christians imagine to themselves that they must hold the traditional records to be true in order to be saved, then they are handed over defenceless to the attacks of historical criticism. To the Protestant Churches at least it does not occur to keep this science at a distance from the traditional records or from the churches.

xvi. *Protestants could easily be taught the immorality of confessing belief in doctrines the truth of which they doubt.*

It is still worse that Christians so protected are tempted to pronounce true for their salvation's sake what they themselves are really in doubt about. The right course would be for them to confess to themselves, with earnest resignation, their doubts about much in the traditional records of the Bible, and at the same time to attach themselves all the more fervently to what they do comprehend in this tradition as a power influencing them at the present moment. We may still count on being understood, when we tell the people that they will never become Christians by being ready to appropriate what is intellectually foreign to them, which can never bring them any spiritual transformation. They still understand when they are told that Christian faith is heartfelt obedience—that is to say, reverence and trust towards the personal Spirit who, while He leaves no man in the

world alone, yet speaks to us most plainly in the Christian Church, in the Bible, and in the Christ they preach. We entertain this hope because among us the word 'conscience' still has a sound which insists on being heard. For our nation this word implies a reminder that the command of morality lays claim to our heart of hearts, and therefore is not content to be a mere limit imposed upon our appetites, but is the expression of our own inward thought. That experience constitutes a spiritual bond between Jesus Christ and men. But that involves a mighty force, if men feel themselves in duty bound to be independent, and know they are lost unless they follow their own convictions. Whoever wishes to remain morally in earnest, must acknowledge to himself that the only authority to which he has the right to subject himself, is one which stimulates and develops his spiritual independence. That is effected by the personal Spirit, who makes all that find Him see that He alone is worthy to be

supreme. But doctrines which require our belief although it is not possible for us to conceive of the ideas they express as the truth, take away from us our responsibility for our own thoughts.

XVII. *Submission to authority is Rome's only way of salvation, and it involves being afraid to think.*

An authority of this kind, bringing moral ruination to any man who will let himself be inwardly guided by it, is set up in Rome in the name of Christ as the only thing which can save a man. That Church, therefore, fills those who belong to her with the notion that they become pious and morally in earnest if they are willing, for the sake of being saved, to live very circumspectly and to suppress their own perceptions. But whoever allows himself to be persuaded that he saves his soul by running away from what is real, or by deliberately renouncing sincerity, will have to avoid altogether any serious consideration of

these matters. That slumber of the soul which is supposed to help him, would run the utmost risk of being disturbed if he were stimulated by such consideration to discern for himself what is morally good. By the unrest caused by the acquisition of such knowledge a man gets a distaste for the indolence which is involved in the capacity to be lulled to sleep by the sound of words in which the voice of his own heart is not heard. The man who is morally awake can no longer evade the question whether he is sure that these words are from God. What is called in the Church of Rome caring for one's salvation can be no longer maintained, when, either by his independent perception of what is good or by the earnestness of his conscience, the man has got his eyes so far open that God can reveal Himself to him. Therefore Romanist theology dares not venture on an energetic advance towards truth in morals. The Church of Rome is well aware that sincerity is damaging to her. Her moral science, then, may indeed

advance knowledge of souls—knowledge of how weak and how cunning a man is in his times of anxiety. But she is not in a position to advance the knowledge of ethics.

XVIII. *Both defences of Gury's 'Anna' illustrate the loss of sincerity in both theology and ethics.*

This dangerous limitation, which the Church of Rome is obliged to impose on herself, appears in the discussion of the moral questions raised by me, and that not merely in the pages of Adloff but also in Mausbach. Adloff comes forward as the advocate of the woman Anna. What he says in her defence is still more horrible, because more deliberate than Gury's frank account of the conduct of that truthful lady—truthful in the Romanist sense. To her husband, who has his suspicions aroused, the adulteress says three times in

different words that she has not broken their marriage relationship ["se matrimonium non fregisse," see p. 137]. Adloff says the woman was at liberty to speak as she did, for the marriage relationship still stood intact. The facts that her husband is also well aware of this, that his question has to do with something quite different, and that if he still has any confidence in his wife he cannot but infer from her answer that she has committed no act of adultery—that, in fact, she purposely deceives her husband—all this does not prevent this priest and teacher of priests from saying that she is not a liar, that she is truthful. He even finds nothing suspicious in her use of the Church's declaration that as a consequence of her confession God has forgiven her sin, as the means of a fresh deception of her husband by saying she is "not guilty" of this crime. Finally, he finds it quite in order that she should say to her husband, "I have committed no adultery." She was at liberty to say so, he says, while thinking in her own

mind, "No act of adultery which I should have to make known to *you*."

### XIX. *What must Adloff's own morality and religion be?*

In the first place, the observation which forces itself upon me is: that in any man who abides by expressions like these the last remnant of the fear of God must have been extinguished. His conscience is not roused when he teaches his poor people that they may regard the assurance addressed to them that God had forgiven them as a first-rate means of deceiving a person whom above all others they have no right to deceive. Any one who fears God and has a suspicion of what it means that God forgives sins, will not speak like that. The fact that Adloff can do so almost forces us to conjecture that the words 'God' and 'forgiveness' are to him empty words. As against me, he says that I failed to consider that the woman as a Catholic Christian was firmly convinced that the priest had conferred

upon her the divine forgiveness, and that so her guilt was taken away. But if she really was convinced of it, surely that is just what makes it such a ghastly idea that she should use the mercy she has experienced at God's hands to deceive her husband more thoroughly. That a teacher in a Romanist seminary for priests has no capacity to understand this is a fact well worth noting. Adloff thinks that on page 31 he has routed me with the remark that in the case of this woman the sacrament of penance had wrought a true change of heart with the entrance of sanctifying grace into her soul. But if that had taken place, surely it would have had to show itself first of all by the woman's not hiding from herself any longer the meaning of the command to love one's neighbour, by her aiming, that is, at complete mental and spiritual fellowship with her neighbour. According to the view of this Romish priest, on the contrary, the 'sànctifying grace' produces in this woman the determination, with the help of the sacrament of penance, to

build up between herself and her husband a thicker wall still, against which, of course, her evil conscience will always fret.

xx. *In spite of Mausbach's quibbles, Rome's maxims, quoted by Adloff, do allow equivocations.*

But we are chiefly concerned with the Roman Catholic conception of truthfulness which here comes to the surface. It is true Mausbach thinks: "Even if this solution of the question of casuistry in Gury's book is not free from all objection, there is absolutely no provocation given for hacking it to pieces from the point of view of principle after the fashion that Herrmann adopts."[1] Of course I should not make any further use of that utterance of the French Jesuit to illustrate the Romanist way of thinking, if we were honestly told that it was an error which merits our indignation. But two distinguished German teachers of Romanist theology appear in its support. Is

[1] Mausbach, p. 16.

it to be called "hacking a thing to pieces," when I take expressions of Romanist theologians seriously after they have received the Church's approval, and on the basis of these try to see whether they contain a morally clear idea of truthfulness? With this in view we must first examine under a clear light the principle which Adloff brings forth from the treasury of the Romish Church in order to present the adulterous and lying woman as morally without spot. He says: "Catholic theologians admit indeed that there are cases in which for reasons of importance one can employ equivocations, or what is known as 'perceptible reservation' (*restrictio late mentalis*) in dealing with an unauthorised questioner. Since in the use of such phrases the true sense is evident, either from the words themselves or from the circumstances in which they are spoken, and the person addressed must for that reason set it down to himself and his own haste in jumping to conclusions if he takes up the matter wrongly

—for these reasons the use of double meanings and the *restrictio late mentalis* cannot be described as lying." "The reply which the woman Anna gives to her husband is of this nature." In spite of these statements Adloff declares it to be a Catholic principle "that in our intercourse with others it is never in any case allowable to speak otherwise than we really think" (p. 6).

XXI. *Adloff and Mausbach fail to understand my guarded words about the rare duty of untruth.*

I had said that in my opinion and in that of many Protestant theologians, it not only was in certain definite circumstances allowable, but might be a matter of duty, to use untrue speech. Adloff calls that "a lax view." But surely it is moral earnestness for any one to try to make clear to himself what his duty is. If we clearly discern that in certain definite circumstances it is denied or forbidden to us to enter into mental and spiritual communion

with any person, then events may so shape themselves as that it will be our duty in dealing with him to use untrue speech. This untrue speech is in that case not lying, but fulfilment of a duty which we have made clear to ourselves with an uncompromising sincerity. But I did also add to that a reminder of how easily it may happen that any one might try to palliate an untruth that he tells simply out of cowardice—a lie, in other words—by saying he was in duty bound to protect some important interest by it. Adloff has no capacity to understand these earnest instructions for finding out what is commanded us in the way of morals in certain very definite circumstances. For he goes on to assert, just as Mausbach does, that I said that under certain circumstances we were at liberty to deceive others by the use of untrue speech. But I spoke not of being 'at liberty,' or of being 'allowed,' but of 'duty.' If we are dealing with a person whose state of mind forbids our having complete mental and

spiritual communion with him, circumstances may so shape themselves as that untrue speech is absolutely commanded us. Surely this formula is intelligible. Besides, it is provided with the warning how we may be deluded by lack of trust in God, by the frivolous inclination to play the part of Providence, or by cowardice, into supposing that a case of the kind presents itself.

### XXII. *Adloff and Mausbach misrepresent my views.*

Now, why do my Romanist opponents go to work with my proposition so carelessly as to distort it into its very opposite? That is what they do. Mausbach says: "Many hold that under special circumstances, especially in the interests of a neighbour, lies are allowable, and this is the view of Rothe, Herrmann, and others."[1] Adloff makes use of my expression of opinion that sometimes the duty of using untrue speech may arise even in dealing with

[1] P. 67.

an invalid. He believes he ought to infer from that as my opinion: "The doctor *may* say what is untrue to his patient in order to deceive him, because he does it for the benefit and advantage of the patient." "The doctor *may* sometimes deceive his patient by the use of untrue speech."[1] Adloff will be obliged to admit that I did not say so.

### XXIII. *The duty of untruth—a supposed case of a doctor and patient.*

It is *the duty* of a physician to make clear to himself when, according to his own convictions, complete mental and spiritual intercourse between him and the sick man is rendered impossible by disease. In a case of this kind it may happen that precisely the kind of mental and spiritual communion which ought to exist between him and his patient would be prevented if he were to speak out his own view of the disease without reserve. In concealing that view he recognises the actual

[1] P. 25.

fact which forces itself on him—the situation which is created by the disease—and just by following that course he acts with sincerity. For instance, so as not to destroy the small expectation of recovery, which is all that in his opinion now exists, he would not venture in many cases to say how small he holds it to be. In order to rouse the energy of his patient he is obliged to give a stronger colouring to the expression of his hope when he is talking with the patient than when he pictures the situation to himself alone. Whether that has to be done, and how it is to be done, depend on the intellectual character of the patient and on the effects produced by the disease upon his intellectual powers. If in a case like this the physician always used the words which correspond to his own view, he would be acting contrary to his duty. For these words would often fail to make the situation he is in at all clear to the patient, but would thoroughly bewilder him. The energy still present in him is itself

a part of his condition, and if kindled into a determination to live, it may overcome the danger, and it ought to do so. At this particular moment, therefore, he will attain to inward clearness of view by not only being conscious of the danger, but also rousing himself to hope. But the physician will sometimes be unable to hide from himself that an actual discussion of the disease is not the form of mental and spiritual communion which can draw him and his patient together. So he can attain the communion possible in this case only by respecting as something fixed the intellectual condition in which the patient is, both with regard to his disease and in consequence of it. He is brought into moral unity with his patient by bringing him to a consciousness of the danger, and at the same time rousing his hope of life. For in that case he has helped the patient to such clearness of understanding of the position as was possible to him. So it is his duty to use the words that are necessary for that purpose,

although they do not accurately reproduce his own view of the disease, and are so far therefore untrue. But this duty arises in his case from his discernment of the fact that complete mental and spiritual communion with the man is forbidden to him.

XXIV. *Adloff's misquotation is intended to cover Roman Catholic excuses for equivocation.*

Adloff will surely concede that he does not correctly reproduce the sense of this statement by using the words: "The physician *is at liberty* to say to his patient what is not true, in order to deceive him, because he does it for the benefit and advantage of the sick man." For the question in this case is not one of '*being at liberty*' to do so, but of the *duty* of untrue speech. But this duty results from the fact that in this case not only is the possibility of complete mental and spiritual communion excluded, but also the one form of mental and spiritual communion possible is brought about by the untrue words on the

physician's lips. That a consideration of the benefits arising to the other person justifies me in deceiving him by cunningly ordered words is of course Adloff's view, not mine. Adloff wants some defence for the Catholic Christian who for his own advantage would fain deceive some one else. He thinks he finds this defence in the fact that the conscientious Catholic can say to himself that he desires the deception even more for the other man's advantage than for his own. But deception is still lying, even when it is supposed to be carried on only for the advantage of the other man. On the other hand, the deception may become our peremptory duty, if it is clear to us that complete mental and spiritual communion is for the moment morally impossible for us.

xxv. *The real absolute duty is not 'true' words but fellowship, and the moral danger involved must be honestly faced.*

So, then, while on one hand I know of

no unconditional command prescribing true speech, yet of course I know of an unconditional moral command, the command that I am to try to establish personal communion wherever it is possible for me. It is out of this command, which comprises the whole field of morality, that there flows the duty of speaking true words, a duty, however, which, like all duty, is limited by circumstances. If it is clear to me that complete mental and spiritual communion with some person is forbidden me, then circumstances may so shape themselves that it becomes my duty to speak what is untrue. I am well aware that such cases are very rare. That this limitation of the duty of truthfulness may be converted into a dangerous temptation I am also aware. But I am just as well aware that nothing ought to hinder me from indicating the distinction between the moral law and duty just on this point in which it is especially easy for persons lacking in moral lucidity to make their habit of running away from their moral

perceptions appear in the light of strictness about moral principle.

xxvi. *Rome's idea of the unconditional duty arose from her misconception of morality, and affords protection for deceit.*

My Romanist opponents have a large practical interest in their incorrect assertion that the requirement of true speech is an unconditional one. For they find in it a protection for deceit, without which they think they could not get on in human intercourse. Deceit is the arbitrary suspension of intellectual communion with persons with whom we come into communication outwardly. A Romanist Christian regards an act of this kind as sinful if the words employed as the vehicle of the deception are not capable of justification as true in any connection whatever. But if, on the other hand, they are capable of justification as true in some connection or other which the deceived person does not dream of, then according to the Romanist

view the act of deceit is in harmony with what is proclaimed to be the unconditional command to speak true words. But then in consequence deceit itself appears to these Christians to be justified, because it can (as they think) be shown to be true speech, and by natural consequence always a means for any good purpose whatever. But I am very far from thinking that this curious conception of the "unconditional duty of true speech" has been invented solely for the purpose of making deceit easier. These practical considerations, however, serve only to confirm the mistake. It never arose from them.

### XXVII. *Rome's error is the neglect of inward sincerity, and it vitiates all her morality.*

On the contrary, the tenet that the command of true speech must be regarded as an unconditional one is to be traced back in the Romish Church to the fact that people do not take into consideration what alone can be understood to be unconditionally required of us,

viz., sincerity of our will, shown in the serious recognition of what is real, and in an aim unchangeably directed toward personal communion. In their treatment of the subject of speaking the truth neither Adloff nor Mausbach holds that the most important point of view is that in every case a man's sincerity should consist in an inward disposition filled with love. The question whether the man is inwardly sincere, and therefore set without any reserve on realising whatever personal communion with his neighbour is possible to him, is one which does not impress them as the only important one. They do not know what moral law is, or moral disposition, or at least they do not know how to make it plain. This is why in the name of their Church they set up the unconditional command that under all circumstances we ought to employ true words. It does not trouble them that in certain circumstances this command may come into conflict with our moral discernment, namely, when we

discern that with a particular person at a particular moment we ought not to have that mental and spiritual communion which would be constituted by our using true words. But a command which requires to be obeyed without regard to whether the moral judgment harmonises with or contradicts it, is a mere regulation. Obedience to a command of this kind is not a moral obedience. It is no expression of our own moral sense, but connected as a matter of course with a determination to make the best compromise possible with a requirement that has been forced upon us. That is the position which the Roman Catholic Church adopts to what it regards as morally enjoined. The very heart of her morality is the determination to fulfil those commands, but so to fulfil them that one's own interests shall suffer as little as possible in the process. It remains a secret unknown to this ostensibly Christian Church that on these lines we do not get as far as *moral* conduct at all, but are still dealing with

*legal* conduct. In what follows, then, I want to proceed in such a way as to throw light by means of Adloff's admissions on those evil consequences which arise from the Church of Rome's want of moral clearness of vision. On the other hand, I cannot carry on the discussion of the nature of what is moral with him alone without doing injustice to the Romanist theology. In this respect we can make some further progress with Mausbach.

### XXVIII. *Subdivision of criticism of Adloff's defence of equivocations.*

In the treatment which Adloff accords to the case of the woman Anna the strange reversion to barbarism produced in the methods of thought under the domination of Romanist principles becomes specially evident. In spite of his outward adherence to the unconditional command to speak the truth, his Church's fundamental principle, which he quotes on the subject of equivocations, shows itself to be an instruction in how to lie—to be an ex-

pression, that is, of profound untruthfulness. That principle says that in dealing with an unauthorised questioner a man may for reasons of importance employ equivocations which are calculated to deceive him if he does not take note of the equivocation. Let us first consider more closely the 'unauthorised questioner,' then the 'equivocations' which he defends, and then their 'reasons of importance.'[1]

XXIX. *In 'Anna's' case he unwittingly substitutes 'unauthorised' for 'inconvenient' questioner.*

There are, of course, unauthorised questioners. But the really moral behaviour in dealing with them is to accord them the help of which they stand in need. But that is done, not by equivocations, but by making evident to them that they are asking impertinent questions. Now in the case of the woman Anna this morally strict Romish priest calls the deceived

[1 Unauthorised questioners, § xxix. Equivocations, §§ xxx., xxxi. Reasons of importance, § xxxii.]

husband an unauthorised questioner. He does so although he himself is of course perfectly well aware that this husband is above all others authorised, and in duty bound, to ask questions on the point. But Adloff's failure to feel this contradiction is explained by the fact that he starts from the Roman Catholic conception of the moral command. Along with his Church he regards the moral command as something which he is certainly obliged to obey but does not need to keep before him as the thing he himself recognises to be good, and therefore desires out of his own personal convictions. In consequence the movement of his thought is inevitably bounded by the idea that the Christian with all his claims and his rights stands in a sort of attitude of defence as far as the moral law is concerned. He must obey it, but he persists in thinking that he can desire for himself something different. But if we take up that attitude to the moral command, then we are certainly on the way to making the most comfortable compromise

with it that we can. It is this school which has given rise to the rule that the truth must indeed always be spoken, but that an unauthorised questioner may be treated to equivocations. But because the purpose of that rule is to make the law's yoke easier to a man, that result is achieved in his mind when an inconvenient questioner is unconsciously substituted for the unauthorised one. That is what took place in Adloff's case, just as it did in Gury's. The adulteress is annoyed by her husband's questions. Why should she not defend herself from him, if she only keeps strictly to the rule that her words shall be 'true'? That is the consideration by which Adloff is secretly governed. It is for that reason only that the distinction between 'unauthorised' and 'inconvenient,' which for us stands out so glaringly, can become to him a matter of such indifference that he can tacitly act as if not the former but the latter word stood in the ecclesiastical rule.

xxx. *He boasts of equivocations as arising from reverence for God's (the Church's?) command.*

But Adloff finds the real strength of the Catholic position in the fact that even in the case of the permitted use of equivocations the divine law is honoured by the strict truthfulness of the words employed. An excellent illustration of what that means is furnished by the adulteress whom the Romish Church shelters. She is strictly truthful, this fine woman Anna. As Adloff explains, she is not even to blame if her husband deceives himself; but he is to bear the blame himself because through his want of care he did not observe the double sense of the words. Let us, then, compare with this assertion the first and third answers which she gives her husband; of the second we have already spoken.

xxxi. *Roman Catholics may be shocked by 'Anna,' but her principles are essential to Rome's ethics, and destructive to sincerity.*

To her husband's question whether she has

broken their marriage relationship, she says the first time that she has not broken it. Adloff ventures to adopt the decision which Gury pronounces on this point. "Anna, who has committed adultery, was certainly at liberty to say to her husband, who suspected it, that she had not broken their marriage relationship, for it was still in existence." By so saying, Adloff, as he himself is of course aware, exposes himself to the indignation of every honest man. For there could not be a more impudent insult to all moral earnestness than such a defence of lying.[1] It would be difficult to find a single person in the whole Centre party of the Reichstag who would openly venture to advocate the education of the

[1] To my great regret I am unable to modify this expression without obscuring the state of the question. But I am glad to note that on page 61 Mausbach agrees substantially with me, of course without giving expression to his regret at the outrage offered by Adloff to his Church. It might be urged in Adloff's excuse that the decision he defends seems to be due to the cast-iron character of Jesuit casuistry. Compare Sanchez, *Opus morale in præcepta decalogi.*, Antwerp, 1631, lib. i. 2, 41.

people by the Romish Church to morality of this kind. Even the most determined admirer of the Jesuits would surely blush if he were prepared to side in this case with the Jesuits, and to attribute the blame to the husband for deceiving himself as to the meaning of the reply he received from his wife. For every one will at once take adultery to mean adultery unless he has been accustomed to deal with Romish priests who have been 'morally' taught after the same fashion as Adloff and Gury. All the same, it would be unjust if we were to regard these priests as specially bad. They are no worse than the Church they belong to. In the Romish Church they have never heard anything of the fact that moral goodness consists in the moral sense, which first makes clear to itself that the duty required is its own business and then carries it out. The Roman Catholic Christian dares not know anything about this, because there is room for him in his Church only if he renounces the stability of character which

confers this clearness of moral perception. He may regard the moral commandments in part as motives forming part of human nature, in part as the outward expression given to the divine free will and vouched for as being so by the authority of the Church. But he is prevented from regarding the moral command as the expression of that which is unconditionally necessary and which he himself recognises to be so. For whenever it becomes clear to a person that he himself can discern and should discern what is morally necessary, and that he makes spiritual shipwreck if he does not unreservedly obey this discernment, he has become a being who is lost to the Romish Church even if he remains in outward connection with her. He is then aware that he must himself determine his own acts; whereas the Church of Rome, on the contrary, demands of every man that he shall be guided in his actions by the authorities which she indicates to him; that is to say, by what is regarded as the nature of man and by the

dictum of the Church. Thus a man who has outgrown the age of childhood recognises that he is in duty bound to adopt an attitude which counts in the Church of Rome as mutiny, and carries with it the loss of salvation. Moral earnestness necessarily leads to moral independence. Thus the Church of Rome by making her believing people devoid of moral independence deprives these persons' morality of the earnestness which arises from sincerity, and turns it into a meaningless performance. For there then remains to it only the meaning of a business transaction by which provision is ostensibly made for a man's future salvation. It is possible to push such a business with much zeal; that can be seen in the woman Anna and her spiritual counsellors. But the pushing of such a business shows neither moral earnestness nor moral clearness of vision. If we have ever thought out clearly the moral duty of speaking the truth, we shall not understand how Christians can declare that the woman was finally even at

liberty to answer her husband, "I have not committed any such sin at all," thinking secretly all the time, "Any such transgression as I must make known to you." The duty of speaking the truth consists indeed in this case just in making her transgression known to her husband. Now, I had said that sincerity when rightly understood was the determination to tell no lies to oneself, or not to hide the reality from oneself. I am certainly of opinion that it is impossible to emphasise that with sufficient distinctness in the Christian Church. For we are always subject to the temptation to persuade ourselves that we see the actual fact otherwise than is really the case. Now, Adloff thinks he can use that definition in the interests of himself and his *protégée*. He thinks that according to my own definition the woman Anna is quite truthful. For she is herself quite clear about the fact that she has committed an act of adultery. This remark shows very plainly how in the course of defending lies a man

cannot but become untruthful himself. For of course Adloff himself sees in what connection the woman conceals the real fact from herself. She hides from herself the moral obligation to take on herself the consequences of her sin, an obligation involved in her position. Or does Adloff perhaps think that in consequence of the absolution received at the confessional the moral obligation was removed from the woman? I should hardly like to think that the Romish sacrament of penance had already become such an instrument of debauchery as that.

XXXII. *'Reasons of importance' are based on misquotation of my words, and involve evasion of duty.*

But, further, Adloff knows how to speak of 'reasons of importance' which are to justify the woman in the use of equivocations. Of course these equivocations are in truth simple lies. For they must have the result of deceiving the husband, who has before all

others a claim to the truth in this matter, and the words were chosen confessedly for this purpose. But in the adulteress, and in this teacher at the episcopal seminary for priests, all moral considerations disappear before the 'reasons of importance.' Adloff indicates these reasons of importance: "If, according to our author, it ought sometimes to be permitted to a physician to tell a lie to his patients, we do not see why on similar grounds this woman Anna might not tell a lie to her husband, not so much (!) to escape the deserved reproaches addressed to her by her partner, as to avoid making him unhappy by making known to him her unfaithfulness as a wife, and destroying for ever the peace of their family." By these words Adloff tries in the first place to defend the morality of Rome by appealing to something that I have said. But, as Adloff himself must now acknowledge, it never entered my head to say that a physician is sometimes at liberty to tell a lie to a patient. Lies take place in

dealing with persons with whom it is possible to have that communion which in the last analysis is the one perpetual aim of our volition. So if we have to do with a being in regard to whom at least for the moment personal communion is absolutely excluded, then we cannot be confronted with the duty of attempting to establish communion of that kind by means of speaking the truth. On the contrary, it is possible that in dealing with such a person it may be our duty to decline such communion. It is in such cases alone that it can become our duty to speak untruly. Whoever calls such an attitude lying, as Adloff does, has never known, or has forgotten, that the actions of a man who is morally alive ought under all circumstances to be, not a yielding to a rule that he does not understand, but the energetic assertion of a volition born of his own moral discernment. Now, ought not Adloff to be quite well able to discern that his defence of speech, which is

untrue and calculated for the deception of the husband, has its origin, as little as that speech itself, from a moral disposition? The wife's cheating of her husband he considers to be justified, because by that means she preserves the peace of the family and the husband's happiness. It cannot be said of this husband that he is in such a moral attitude, or is physically so constituted, that the wife cannot but see that it is forbidden to her to enter into complete moral and spiritual intercourse with him. He would not only understand her words, but also be in a position to decide what he had to do with reference to her confession, whether he ought to forgive her or whether he ought to divorce her from him. The moral and spiritual communion which she can have and ought to try to maintain with her husband, would show itself above all in the two of them uniting in profound horror of adultery. It was therefore her duty, as even Romish father-confessors

will secretly acknowledge to themselves, to make her act of adultery known to her husband. The cleverly contrived attempt to deceive him is therefore not an untruth which is morally enjoined, but a lie. But this lie a Romish priest takes under his protection, because he says the wife in telling it had happiness and peace in view. That is to say, he hands the poor woman over to the delusion that family peace can be founded upon manifest sin. Yet I hope that in the civilised nations, even among Roman Catholics, many will be in a position to give a correct description of this attitude of the teacher at the episcopal seminary for priests.[1]

[1] Mausbach, it is true, holds (p. 16) the view that in a case like this a serious ethical question arises as to how the requirement to guard the peace of the household is to be reconciled with the requirement of truthfulness. He thus holds even the arbitrary refusal of their mutual communion, that is to say, the transgression of the moral law, to be a suitable means for procuring the peace of a household.

XXXIII. *The underlying principle of 'Anna's' morality is the substitution of authority's ruling for our own moral choice.*

But if honourable Roman Catholics dissociate themselves from the dishonourable practices which according to the teaching of the Jesuits are commended in an ecclesiastical training institution, still they have not by that means given up the view which underlies these, a view which will still bring forth similar fruits in some direction or other. The practice followed in the case of the woman Anna is the logically correct consequence of the fundamental principles which the Church of Rome upholds in her conception of morals. What the innermost kernel of that view is I have set forth in my exposition which is attacked by Adloff. It is the opinion that we act morally when we obey commands which others have imposed upon us; that our mental attitude towards that command does not come into consideration; that no question is to be asked as to whether we regard the command as an

expression of our own moral sense so that we should prescribe it to ourselves even if no one else prescribed it to us; that, in fact, morality does not grow out of an act of our own independent thought, but out of our renunciation of any illumination of our consciousness, that is, out of a renunciation of sincerity; and that morality does not consist in the inward and therefore complete surrender of ourselves to a requirement which is apprehended by our own discernment as true, and therefore as inevitably binding, that it consists, on the contrary, in obedience rendered to a command laid upon us by others. Whoever shares that view of morals is always found on the road to conduct of the kind that Adloff has defended in the woman Anna.

### XXXIV. *Adloff claims for Rome all my marks of true morals, yet defends Probabilism.*

But it is not to be wondered at if Adloff

resents the exposition on these lines of the meaning of the Romish conception of morals. The most part of what I have set down as the distinguishing marks of real morality he claims for himself and his Church. There is nothing else to be done if that Church is not to lose all credit with earnest men at the present time. But at the same time Adloff is obliged to defend Probabilism, and in doing so to defend that theory of the Church of Rome in which her opposition to what is good is most clearly seen. Now this defence forms a very instructive parallel to the want of exact moral thought which is already seen in his apology for the woman Anna. In it we have a proof of the Church of Rome's incapacity to distinguish between the moral command on the one side —as the expression of what is apprehended by one's own discernment to be unconditionally necessary—and on the other side an uncomprehended regulation. This Christian Church has no clear understanding of what moral law is, or the moral sense. In this defence of

Probabilism is seen her incapacity to understand the idea of duty and the culture of the sense of duty.

xxxv. *But his claim to independent convictions is scarcely serious.*

"The Catholic lives out his life on his own initiative as a free man, for he follows his convictions."[1] Adloff even thinks that he can say of a Catholic that he recognises in the moral commandment, not anything alien to himself, but a law of his own. "The command laid upon him from without he turns into a law of his own by a cordial submission of himself to it."[2] How that comes to pass—how, that is, a Catholic is placed in a position to act on his own convictions—is described by Adloff as follows: "His knowledge that God not only is justified in giving him laws, but has actually given him laws, is the means of conveying to him a law capable of imposing an obligation on

[1] "Evang. und Kathol. Sittl. Kontroverse," p. 22.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 20, and "Kathol. Moral und Sittl.," 1901, p. 38.

his will; thus the command of God becomes to him a law of his own." But in so saying he himself admits that the talk about his own convictions and a law of his own is not to be taken so very seriously. For commandments whose obligatory force he finds merely in the fact that God, who would be justified in giving them, has actually done so, do not of themselves form a component part of his own convictions. What he thinks he is convinced of is only that God, who may demand his obedience, has laid some such obligation on him. So, if the information never reached him that this was God's will, he would find no reason in himself for so acting. When a man conceives himself as adopting such an attitude in regard to the moral command, then that command is alien to his own inner self. If, nevertheless, he asserts, as Adloff does, that from his heart, or out of his own free convictions, he wills that command as something of his own, that assertion has no comprehensible meaning. It is a mere piece of

ornamentation which is used, even if unconsciously so, with the purpose of concealing the immorality of this line of thought.

XXXVI. *Rome's boasted submission to God's law is not really religious, for she lacks the requisite understanding of both freedom and obedience.*

But the Catholic with this ready subjection of himself to the command of God seems to show at least some religious earnestness. Such a conclusion would be a very hasty one. For it must not be forgotten at the same time that it is only when a man is conscious of being gripped by the power of goodness that he can set the living God before his eyes. *Superstitions* devoid of conscience may indeed exist, but not a *religion* devoid of conscience. Only the man who can stand by himself in the strength of his moral perceptions can be religiously alive. For it is only in his independent perception of what is good that he has the ability to perceive the power of God

that is at work upon him. But of course if Adloff declines to let his own reason recognise the good and lay down the law to him, then we must not attribute to him so lofty a capacity. For he does not in the least understand what is meant by it. So he says: "In the act of laying down commands which impose duty, the reason either is free or is not. If it is free, then it can always absolve me from the command. In other words, no real obligation is set up." A reason which can itself remove the moral law which was once laid down by itself as being true, would surely be a very unreasonable reason.[1] But that sentence is of the utmost importance for understanding the way in which a man thinks who has been brought up on Romanist lines. He has no proper conception of the inevitable compulsion exercised by the truth that a man knows for himself. This germ of inward

[1] What Adloff says in his second pamphlet (p. 43) in justification of this pronouncement, I shall come back upon in my criticism of Mausbach further on.

independence has not been able to develop in him, because he has always imagined to himself that ultimately he is bound to listen to other people. It is from that notion that his conceptions of freedom and of obedience take their rise. By freedom Adloff and the Church of Rome in general understand the absence of any outward compulsion and the opportunity thus afforded for utterly arbitrary action. It is true he has acquired through his connection with Christianity a suspicion that a man ought to be really free under the very deepest bondage. But he cannot get this idea quite clear in his own mind, because he has not yet attained that which in a man's inward self both really binds him and makes him truly free, namely, his own personal knowledge of the unalterable truth. Therefore, wherever he expresses himself without restraint the conception always shows itself that freedom is the absence of external compulsion and an unlimited arbitrary choice. These are the conceptions of a child or of gay young sparks

who live on strained relations with the police. It is the same with Rome's conception of moral obedience: Adloff understands by it the yielding of one's arbitrary choice to a limitation laid upon it. We are all aware that this is always bound up with the man's moral obedience. The arbitrariness and unruliness of the life of sense ought to be restrained. But that is not all. It just as necessarily forms part of moral obedience that the act of submission should have the same origin as the setting up of the limitation. If both do not proceed from truth recognised by the man himself, what we get is not clear moral obedience but a new act of arbitrary choice. Present pleasures are sacrificed with a view to securing in heaven others of the same kind, only much greater. Surely on that method morality becomes a sort of business in the course of which it is just the life of sense which thinks it will get the best of the bargain. I think that even a Catholic Christian who has seen that fact clearly, would be obliged to

admit that while it is true there is in such a case a submission to outward compulsion, there is not a submission from the heart or a real moral obedience. The heavenly pleasures which are in view are indeed wished for, but the burden, by carrying which they are to be earned, one would rather not carry.

XXXVII. *In arguing from a child's obedience, Adloff forgets that Rome does not promote intellectual growth.*

It is very significant how Adloff uses my reference to a child's morality in order to refute us. A child, he says, does not act morally when it does what seems good to it, but when it obeys the orders of its parents because it "discerns that to render obedience to the parents is morally good." Certainly that is so. Then he goes on: "To say so is obviously not to exclude the liberty of the child to aspire after continually understanding those orders better in their sense and meaning. Its efforts must be directed

to becoming more and more independent in thought and action. But even when the child has grasped the reason and meaning of the parental orders, it will fulfil these orders with the greatest readiness, not because it is pleasant or seems good to do so, but it will do whatever the parents wish, and will do it because this ready subjection on the part of children is morally good, *i.e.*, is moral duty." I can agree with these expressions too, if I take them to mean that Adloff does not want to understand by being pleasant and seeming good "what presents itself as morally good to the child's spirit." But still we must ask whether what pleases a child is tolerable in the case of an adult. Surely Adloff will admit that the same act which is childlike in a child may be childish in an adult. A child that obeys its parents, even without any understanding of the meaning of the orders given, is in that act nevertheless morally alive. For in so acting it is guided by its own intuition of the higher

spiritual force and of the self-sacrificing goodness of its parents. This surrender to a stronger personal life is at the first a child's real morality. When the child has bowed in reverence before the spiritual force of persons of greater ethical maturity, then under this influence its consciousness can by degrees become so far clear, that the child will itself keep before it that unconquerable truth in obeying which it knows itself free from every alien power. It is obviously quite different in the case of a Catholic Christian. All his life long he is forced by the ecclesiastical organisation to renounce intellectual and spiritual independence. A non-personal power like this cannot convince him by itself, and the simple proofs which will be brought forward in support of its claims can least of all do it. If, nevertheless, he performs the obedience required of him, he will be no further on for that. For the power which he obeys has been anxious, not for the development of his independence, but

for the silencing of his anxiety and for turning him to account for the Church's ends. In his relations with the organisation of the Church he is therefore not like a child that is being trained, but like one which is being kept back and spoilt. Therefore wherever Catholic nations share the work of Western civilisation the phenomenon forces itself on our notice, that while people are brought into connection with the Church by their religious anxiety, they are separated from it by their growth in intellectual strength. Those who are growing intellectually wish to put away childish things. In dealing with them the Church of Rome appeals to a correct motive, but to one which she misinterprets. She makes appeal, as Adloff does, to the relations of a child to its parents. A man of pious feeling must acknowledge to himself that in dealing with God he always remains a child. But that can only mean that he is ready to surrender himself in childlike trust to the unsearchable decrees of God. But it cannot mean that in

dealing with God he is ready to renounce the independence of his moral perceptions. That would be a blasphemous idea. For just in this grasp of his own upon what is eternal is he really united with God. Whoever has not the knowledge of what is really good can not know God either. For to every one who becomes conscious of Him, God is the Power of goodness experienced as being a saving power. A man who has not of himself the knowledge of what is really good is therefore not the least in a position to be able to obey definite commands as God's commands. That is overlooked by these Romanist theologians in their reference to children. To a child its parents and their commandment are present in a reality that can be felt and grasped. On the other hand, in God's presence it is not our senses that lay compulsion on us. For that reason a child can quite well submit to the superior personal power of its parents, even when it cannot yet discern why the commands of its parents are morally right. On the

other hand, there is no sense in saying that you are ready to obey a command as a command of God's although you do not discern that the realisation of what is commanded is a moral necessity. For it is only as a result of seeing this that you can be sure that the will of God finds expression in the command. The opinion that God's command can be learnt from the Holy Scriptures, or from the Church, without any understanding of our own that what is so commanded is of eternal value, is Romanist certainly, but not Christian.

XXXVIII. *To choose a 'probable' opinion against our better judgment is not to act on our own convictions.*

We shall come nearer to the immoral conception of morality which is involved in that position when we come to deal with Mausbach. First let us show from their defence of Probabilism what the moral

earnestness of the Romanist theologians really means. Of course Adloff informs us that even in this theory the principle is thoroughly maintained that we must always and everywhere obey *our own convictions*, the claim of our own conscience. He says that, although he still holds to the opinion that in the case of a moral decision we may obey the judgment of ecclesiastical teachers of importance,—even if the opposite course is more plainly right in our own view,—provided only that that judgment does not appear to us to be untenable. According to him it is permitted to obey the less probable but always tenable opinion. He says we could obviously translate our will freely into action if we felt ourselves bound by no law. Therefore we have no need to obey a merely probable call of duty, even if there are more considerations for it than against it. For although it may be more probable than its opposite, still it is not certain but doubtful. "But a doubtful law does not bind." If a Catholic follows and

obeys the view which he himself holds to be of less probability, still he is obeying his own conviction — namely, the conviction that a doubtful law does not bind. Therefore: "A Catholic lives freely on his own initiative, for he follows his convictions."

XXXIX. *That is so plain that I hardly like to give it a serious answer.*

And all this is so confidently delivered with such profuse application of the famous phrase "fully and entirely"! In the episcopal seminary for priests, either these platitudes are really accepted seriously, or at least an eager effort is made to preserve the appearance of their being so. It is with reluctance that I apply myself to the task of bringing out the perversity involved in them, because for every honest man it lies on the surface, and because Adloff perhaps smiles to himself to see me apply the strict measuring rod of morals to ecclesiastical regulations which are contrived for the indulgent treatment of immorality.

But perhaps in making the following references to the subject I may help others.

XL. *The fundamental position is that all law is external, and therefore till an external law is unmistakable, a man may obey his inclinations.*

To endow that teaching with an appearance of moral earnestness and of self-consistent thinking is possible only so long as you succeed in repelling objections to the maxim that a will bound by no law may freely express itself in action. Adloff acts as if this maxim were perfectly unimpeachable. In actual fact the maxim will seem self-evident to all who know of no other firm principle in all their actions than what is imposed on them from without either (1) by the established laws, or (2) by the sacred tradition of which the Church is the representative,[1] or (3) even

[1] I omit the illustration which I had in this passage in the second edition. It is cavilled at by Mausbach as well as by Adloff. I suppress what I might say in my own defence. All I care about is to get from their own

by an impulse which forms part of their physical constitution and which consequently expresses itself in a way that cannot be put aside. When none of these three powers says plainly to the will what it ought to do, it is left to depend on itself. That means that the man can then arrive at any decision which is most convenient to himself. In that case his action is no longer directly defined for him by a command laid on him, but by the desire which flows freely from his own heart. As it is grandly expressed, he may "decide for liberty." In order to express the Romanist idea I had said that the man may in that case obey his appetite.[1] Now Adloff explains[2] that that is quite correct, if you understand by 'appetite' the free action of a will which feels itself bound by no law. "If no divine law binds the will and no human one, then it can convert itself freely into action."[3] This concep-

expositions of it such a conception of Probabilism as is actually set forth by German theologians.

[1] P. 169. [2] P. 14 of his first pamphlet.

[3] Adloff, p. 51 of his second pamphlet.

tion that we can take refuge in our freedom if the law is not promulgated with sufficient clearness, rests of course on the fundamental principle that the moral law comes to a man from without. "Consequently the source of duty is the divine will and not the human reason." Starting from that point you may easily conjure up a legal controversy between our will, which has a claim to freedom, and the divine will, which can bind us only by prescribed rules which are perfectly clear. Therefore Adloff notices that I had myself admitted that the Probabilist argues correctly if he says we may obey our own wishes even when it is more probable that God has imposed upon us the duty about which the doubts arise, if only the rule holds good that the moral command is imposed by God, *or, in other words, from without.*[1] I have always so understood these fundamental principles of Romanist morals which have received the Church's sanction. For that reason, too,

[1] Adloff, p. 50 of his second pamphlet.

Probabilism has appeared to me their natural fruit.

XLI. *Probabilism allows neglect of probable duty for a less probable opinion of a Church teacher. That is not to follow one's conviction.*

The probabilist makes the secret sense of these fundamental principles clear when he defends the principle that even if *to our own selves* it is more probable that God desires of us a particular course of action, we are still not in duty bound to it, as long as substantial reasons can still be urged against it, such reasons, *e.g.*, as the judgment of ecclesiastical teachers of note. "If he (the Catholic) holds his own opinion to be the more probable, while at the same time the opinion of the theologian in question is not made by it to appear untenable to him, then he may without doubt follow that theologian's opinion, just as between two views of our own we may choose and follow the less probable but of course

tenable one."[1] After that Adloff thinks it proved as clear as daylight that the Church of Rome with its Probabilism does not lead to fundamental unconscientiousness. Surely in Probabilism the maxim is honoured: "A man must everywhere and always follow his own convictions, the claim of his own conscience." To me what is proved by it is that Adloff is labouring to evade the point in which the Romanists' confounding of morality with a mere legalised behaviour becomes most evident. Does he, then, follow his own convictions, when he does, not what he himself considers the more right thing, but its opposite? Adloff avoids this question. For he says that the man surely has the conviction that something to the point can be said for this opposite. Therefore he is in the happy position of being able to exercise his freedom, and to choose the course more convenient to himself, although it seems to himself more probable that God desires of him the harder

[1] P. 16 of his first pamphlet.

duty. So Adloff thinks he can say even to God: "If Thou didst wish to compel me to do the other thing, Thou shouldst have expressed Thyself more plainly."

XLII. *That involves a supposed claim on God for a clearer voice than that of our conscience.*

Of course he is at liberty to speak to his God like that, if he does not understand the voice of that God in the compelling force of his own moral judgment. For then God is to him an external power to which he can stand in a sort of legal relationship. In that case he can set up a claim upon God that the commands which are to limit human freedom must be promulgated with indubitable distinctness. Perhaps Adloff sometimes reflects whether the God to whom he can so speak is not an idol after all. Of course he would soon come into collision with his Church if he were to fight his way through to the glorious knowledge that the living God is

the spiritual power which lays obligations on our inmost self by means of the perceptions of our own conscience, and through His wonderful revelation as forgiving love reconciles us to our conscience, that is, gives us a good conscience.

XLIII. *Such substitution of regulations for convictions of our own is Rome's protection against conscientious convictions.*

But by this time Adloff must perceive that in the course of conduct which he defends the man is not following his own convictions, at least not his moral convictions or his conscience. It is a miserable evasion for him to say that he is directing himself by his convictions, because he is convinced that for the course more convenient to himself quite good reasons can be made out. In reality he is using this 'conviction' in order to evade the moral judgment, which is nevertheless asserting itself in him. For it is a self-evident truth to any man who really wishes to follow

his conscience, that with the perception that the harder alternative is probably the right one, there is at once joined the moral judgment that even in that case he must accept it as the duty commanded for him. A man like that can at least be in no doubt which way his own moral perception points him. If he avails himself of the permission of the Romish Church, and does the opposite to what he himself holds to be probably correct, he will never get clear of the accusation of having been well aware that he ought to do something different. That self-accusation will be silenced only when he has let himself be persuaded that the decision depends, not on his own attitude to the question, but only on the 'objective' regulations of his conduct which the Church makes clear to him. But objective regulations which are not meant to be the expression of a man's own moral discernment have for these people the meaning of legal regulations, however much they may be called commands of God or moral com-

mands. But if a man is still really regulating his life only by rules which he is unable to regard as the form taken by a sincere volition, or, in other words, as true, then the Church of Rome has attained in him the aim of her instructions, the conversion of ethical life and activity into legal obedience. As long as this influence of the Church is over him the man is protected against his own conscience, and kept from growing up into moral independence.

XLIV. *She incites a man to neglect a vision of duty that is becoming clear to him.*

The Church which calls Probabilism good does, then, protect the individual against the requirements made on him by his own conscience. When as the result of his own thinking his volition is pointed in a particular direction, the Church calls his attention to the fact that this indication is not placed before him in the form of an external limitation, and from that she draws the comforting conclusion

that then his own will is not bound in regard to it, but is free. The actual fact that the will, as a movement of the intelligent spirit of man, is inwardly bound by what it recognises as true, is thrust on one side. In cases of hesitating decision this obligation shows itself in some definite course beginning to be clear to the man. Thus the Church by adjudging him the right to ignore this incipient clearing of his vision and to remain at a stage beyond which he has really advanced in his own mind, absolves him entirely from that inward obligation. But that is equivalent to saying that she provokes him to make the moral sense within him of no effect.

XLV. *All Rome intends is to calm religious perplexities; but she is stilling a symptom of soul life.*

Of course it is only to a limited extent that the Church of Rome achieves this emasculation of human spirits. We are quite ready to believe, too, that this is not the result which

she intends. Her consciousness of the facts, which is there, though limited in development, is not clear enough for that. She intends, as far as words go, to do no more than make the burden of morality lighter for men. In his defence of Probabilism Adloff says: "Let it not be forgotten that a truly probable opinion has good firm reasons on its side, and is therefore capable of bringing an intelligent peace to him who acts on it." According to that, Adloff sees in Probabilism a piece of ecclesiastical management which is to protect men against useless torture of themselves. Their inward unrest is to be quieted. What he seems not to observe is, that by this means that is brought to rest which ought always to continue in a state of progressive activity. The man's desire to make clear to himself what is a moral necessity, that is to say, what is good, is benumbed by means of the terrible forces of the Church, which entirely forgets at this point that she ought to help men, not merely to a calm feeling about

their life hereafter, but to become alive in the present life.

### XLVI. *Subdivision of reply to Mausbach's defence of Probabilism.*

Mausbach has made a special reply to this verdict of mine on the Romanist ethics as they culminate in Probabilism, hoping for it that I shall recognise it as "made in serious earnest."[1] We proceed to examine, first, what he has to say about Probabilism, then his treatment of the fundamental ideas of Romanist morals about which I am supposed not to have troubled myself, but which are "to stand against" my conclusions "like a wall of brass."

### XLVII. *Roman Catholics are often unfamiliar with and unconcerned about Probabilism.*

The logical consequences of the methods of

[1] *Die Kathol. Moral: ihre Methoden, Grundsätze, und Aufgaben* ("Catholic Morals: their Methods, Principles and Problems"). 2nd edition enlarged, Cologne, 1902, p. 9.

thought customary in the Church of Rome encounter a powerful resistance within herself. They have their force broken by people's memories of Biblical ideas, and they are set aside by the repugnance of earnest men. It is therefore quite easy to understand that the real meaning of the ideas on which their Church wants to erect her exposition of morality remains a secret to many Catholics. For this reason we can also understand how earnest Catholics simply leave Probabilism without consideration, or form such an inaccurate idea of it as Ehrhard, for example, does.[1]

XLVIII. *Mausbach professes a thorough-going defence, and says I misunderstand Probabilism.*

But Mausbach, of course, cannot do so if he is prepared to accomplish all that he has announced. He has no fault to find with

[1] *Der Katholizismus und das zwanzigste Jahrhundert* ("Catholicism and the Twentieth Century"). Fourth to eighth edit., 1902, pp. 198–201.

Probabilism—the little criticism on page 88 does not count—while Ehrhard at any rate confesses that the defences set up for this theory had been "on more than one occasion" calculated to convey the impression of immorality "owing to a series of bad mistakes in the guilt of which authors of treatises on moral theology have involved themselves, and for which scientific moral theology has had to suffer down to our own days." Mausbach cannot but express a different judgment of this matter. He is not hampered by anything in his defence of Probabilism, and against me he must find it all the easier since he has discovered in my attack on it an "amusing misunderstanding of it."[1]

### XLIX. *He asserts that I misunderstand the 'freedom' Rome alleges.*

"It is really an amusing misunderstanding to represent the balancing between duty and freedom from the point of view of the Pro-

[1] Mausbach, *die Katholische Moral*, 2nd edit., p. 87.

babilists, as if freedom from a definite law were the relaxation of every moral obligation, and giving the rein to immoral instincts and interests."[1]

### L. *The points I had raised against the morality of that 'freedom.'*

In continuation of this declaration one naturally expects to find a reasoned discussion of the point to which my criticism of the immoral character of Probabilism refers. I had asked: "In any case, does not the fact remain untouched, that the Catholic Christian is invited by his Church to act contrary to his own moral discernment?" (p. 160 above). As the most important consideration in judging of Probabilism I had named this—"that the mere fact of doubts accompanying our moral decision is to give us the right not to listen to our own moral perceptions. Although these moral perceptions assert themselves in the presence of the doubt, we are still to be

[1] Mausbach, *die Katholische Moral*, 2nd edit., p. 87.

justified in obeying, not the call of duty, but our own appetite" (see above, p. 169). I had also recalled the fact that Jesuit theologians of the highest reputation find an agreeable lightening of Christ's yoke in the frequency with which the opinions on moral questions differ from one another, because in that case we can use our freedom in the choice [1] (p. 159).

[1] Compare J. Sanchez, *Selectae et practicae disputationes*, Antw., 1644, Disp. 44, n. 70, p. 322. "Rursus praemeditandum immerito aliquos dolore commoveri et tristari, quod tot reperiantur diversae sententiae in rebus moralibus; potius in eo fulgere maxime providentiam divinam est arbitrandum. Nam ex opinionum varietate jugum Christi suaviter sustinetur." "Providentiâ ergo supernâ cautum est, unicam tantum viam operationum mortalium non dari, sed rectam inveniri posse actionem sive juxta unam sive alteram opinionem operentur mortales." "Deo namque nullum emolumentum accrescit, quod quis operetur juxta unam vel alteram opinionem; solum desiderat mandatum suum non infringi. Cum ergo juxta opinionem probabilem operans Dei praeceptum non infringat, Dei non interest quidquam, quod juxta unam vel aliam opinionem operatio deducatur." In these passages he treats of those varying opinions of approved authors by which there are opened out for us different possibilities of action. Every recollection has here vanished of the fact that out of his own moral sense the man ought to arrive at an unequivocal determination

LI. *Mausbach quibbles, and evades the point that Rome allows us to refuse our own moral judgment.*

Mausbach knew, then, to what point he had to direct his attention if he wished to protect his Church from the reproach of provoking to unconscientiousness. What Adloff advances without any scruples and in confidence of victory, Mausbach, on the other hand, was even obliged to defend. He had to show that it was not unconscientious for a Romanist Christian acting on his Church's instructions not to do what he himself holds to be right, on the ground that pertinent reasons may be urged for its opposite. But it never once occurs to him to enter upon this proof. He

of what his duty is. For the variation among the opinions which it is supposed a man is at liberty to obey is praised as a piece of good fortune. Further from the right understanding of morality a system of morals cannot go. Compare also A. Escobar, *Univ. Theol. mor. Lugd.*, 1652, p. 34. God is praised by these theologians, not only because He relieves man of his duty of deciding in moral questions, but also because by means of equally justifiable directions He makes it impossible.

says: "If he does not arrive at it (*i.e.*, at moral certainty) because there are reasons present both for and against, then since there is no discernment, there is no 'knowledge,' and therefore no conscience either, of a kind that makes duty obligatory" (p. 89). In this way he evades the matter to which I had drawn attention. It is, however, assumed that the Catholic Christian does know something of great importance in the case, viz., that he himself holds one decision to be more right than the other. Even then his Church tells him he need not come to this decision; he may choose its opposite if it suits him better; the right to do so is given him in the fact that he possesses a free will which can be limited only by commands which are plain and affected by no doubts. Many German Catholics will undoubtedly confess that, if they allowed themselves to be talked into that course, they would bitterly reproach themselves in consequence, because they had departed from what their own moral judgment indicated.

In these reproaches they would recognise the accusations of their conscience. So, then, the Church of Rome provokes to unconscientiousness. And she arrives at that by not seeking a man's inward obligation where alone it is to be found, *i.e.*, in his own moral perceptions.

LII. *Does his own conscience hamper him in replying?*

Why does not Mausbach try to prove that there is no sin in this "use of our freedom," which is enjoined by the Church, and in this suppression of our own moral perceptions? Perhaps his own conscience restrains him from it. Then it would be possible to understand his assertion as against me (p. 90): "The Church does not tell us we have the right to ignore the incipient clearing of our conscience," and the reason he gives for this, viz., that the Catholic is in duty bound to attempt to ascertain the truth directly by moral consideration of the facts, etc.; that it is only when such means fail that he is at liberty

to make use of the means which Probabilism affords him.

### LIII. *Mausbach seems ashamed of Probabilism, as Ehrhard apparently is.*

Mausbach evidently does not wish to have the Romanist practice spoken of, in which this ignoring of an incipient moral clearing of vision does in fact show itself. He would prefer to hide in silence the fact that Probabilism permits a man not to do what as the result of moral consideration of the matter he has himself recognised to be the more just course. I must confess that to me this refusal to allow himself to enter on this point is the thing that pleases me best in the whole of Mausbach's book. For I may conclude from it that Mausbach is ashamed of this disgrace to his Church, this Probabilism. Even the superficial treatment of this important matter in Ehrhard surely has the same reason behind it. These are very pleasant indications, especially if Adloff is right in saying that the

Church of Rome is quite able to set itself once more free from Probabilism.

LIV. *The 'amusing misunderstanding' turns out to be the immorality of renouncing our own moral judgment.*

But Mausbach renders his Church and himself a bad service when he calls it "an amusing misunderstanding" that I should see in the Probabilists' "use of freedom" the relaxing of all moral obligation. He goes so far as to say that even when the Catholic allows himself to be absolved by his Church from some definite duty he still remains subject to the moral law as a whole. He evidently does not notice how by so saying he betrays the immoral character of his Church's thinking. He surely knows that I have explained the immorality of that departure from the guidance of one's own moral discernment; probably he secretly sides with me in that point himself. But if I see sin in that, he surely ought not to set it down as 'amusing' that I hold every

moral obligation to be relaxed by such an action. We surely cannot hold fast by the moral law at the same instant at which we declare ourselves free from it. Of course a man is always playing such foolish tricks with himself when he succumbs to temptation. The moment of the sin always indicates the victory of this untruth. But the Romanist theologian is rendered less sensitive to the absurdity of this self-deception, because he is not in the habit of thinking out the idea that the moral law, being a law of our moral sense, cannot but be single. If we have really made that clear to ourselves, then we also see that where there is a suppression of the moral sense, a complete renunciation of the moral law has by that act also taken place.

### LV. *He praises Rome for relieving men of the obligation to make moral progress.*

But Mausbach shows how little clearness of view he has reached as to the character of the moral law as a law of our moral sense

by his eulogy of his Church, by which he has made it the easier for him to miss the point he ought to have grasped. I had said that *every moral decision which advances our position* moves through some moments of uncertainty out of which we must work our way. (See above, p. 156.) Mausbach, in quoting the passage where I had said this, leaves out the sentence which contains the words which I have put in italics. By that means he removes from view the very thing that makes the immoral character of Probabilism especially plain. For the advice he gives for a moment like this, when the moral discernment is becoming clearer and growing up into something better than its previous capacity for doing our duty, is that we are at liberty to use the resistance which moral growth has to overcome in order to save ourselves the trouble of that advance. Probable reasons for such a resistance are seldom lacking. His own conscience, of course, urges the man who has been roused to the moral conflict to battle

down those arguments which correspond to his previous life, and to carry through the purpose which he now holds to be more right than the other. But the Church of Rome gives him the advice that he may regard this wavering, through which his growing moral discernment and strength have to force their way, as a proof that in this case no moral direction at all is given him. Thus the Church of Rome does its best to hinder moral growth and to throw back into a merely legal course of conduct men who were becoming morally roused. The Church impresses on them that they ought to allow themselves to be guided, not by their own perceptions of what is unconditionally necessary which are working themselves to the front within them, but by directions coming to them from without. Thus at the very moment when a man ought to evince his moral quickening by emerging from the level of his former capacity for doing his duty, the Church of Rome tells him that that is not necessary; that there is lacking in this case any pre-

scribed rule unassailed by doubt, and only a rule of that kind can make any duty binding on us.

LVI. *He boasts that Rome does not leave room for cases of doubt about the main virtues.*

Thus Mausbach, by leaving out the words which I have emphasised above, disconnects from its proof my observation that Probabilism, absolving the man, as it does, from the claims of morality, would be available at every moment at which he was making moral growth, and would favour his remaining in idleness and untruthfulness. But at the same time he uses my reference to the uncertainty, through which every decision that involves spiritual progress must find its way, for a eulogy of Rome's methods, a eulogy in which he attains to the childlike assurance of Adloff's utterances. He says that there is no such uncertainty among *them*. The Catholic doctrine has succeeded in making 'most' duties so plain to the faithful that their conscience does not need to be first persuaded

into hesitation in order to come out of it again into clear vision. "She preaches the fundamental virtues of the Christian life so plainly that without any consideration the simplest man recognises the temptation to theft, or unchastity, or hatred, etc., as a temptation to sin." We do not undervalue the fact that the Church of Rome forbids theft, unchastity, and disturbance of the peace, with threats of punishment. By that she is in accord with the legal order and with the police of the civilised nations. But, then, has morality really begun in a man because he lets himself be guided by such powers as these and shrinks back from such sins? I have no doubt that Mausbach would agree with us that there can be no word of morality except when the motive for that self-restraint is a moral one. But when is it so?

LVII. *For real inquiry he substitutes trite phrases.*

If they did not evade this question, the

morality and ethics of Rome would be no longer possible at all. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that we find Mausbach, too, declining to face it. He compromises with that question by means of formulas which, while they are of venerable antiquity, can nowadays be used only if you renounce that reflection on the subject which is necessary in so weighty a matter. The Catholic Christian is to attain to the inward state of mind which makes his actions good by accepting the great truths of Christian morality, first with faith, and next with the honest approval of his reason as well, while he also hears in God's word the inmost voice of his own nature. In these views there is little that we can trace of any hard thinking of his own. For centuries they have done duty as they were one by one elaborated. To-day they show no trace of work performed in the present, and do not compel others to work, and are therefore stale and unprofitable.

LVIII. *In spite of his misquotation of me, Mausbach is really ashamed of Probabilism.*

These views (the "wall of brass," the rock on which I am to be shipwrecked) we may examine presently a little more closely. But first we must describe the blessings which are to flow from this rock to Catholic Christendom. "Whoever observes the rules of duty which Catholic morality pronounces to be of greater certainty, whoever takes to heart the counsels which she sets forth as the *via tutior* in cases of doubt, need not trouble himself about his moral progress." He does not need to trouble himself, for whatever the Church prescribes for him is right! So, if he does that, he makes moral progress. To this Mausbach adds the assertion: "Herrmann in so many words calls the recognition of authorities in the sphere of morals a disgraceful act." As he is acquainted with my "Ethics," Mausbach might have known for himself from that book that in so saying he makes a false assertion, for there we read (ed. 2, p. 26): "The beginning of

morality on any definite point is always to be found in the power of a personal authority." But above all he is aware what it is that I have called a disgraceful fact. (See above, p. 169[1]). Of course it is not the recognition of authority in moral life as something immeasurably important. Nor is it that a Christian in his consideration of a moral question should seek the advice of others whom he credits with a higher degree of clearness of moral vision. On the other hand, I certainly hold it to be a way of thinking which every honest man would condemn, if Romanist Christians think they may neglect what seems to themselves to be the more just course, on the ground that the variety of theological opinions about similar cases allows them to seek only for the course most convenient to themselves. But I can understand and forgive Mausbach's inaccuracy at this point in his account of what I said. He would rather not even say anything what-

[1] § 41 in this edition.

ever about what I attacked. He does not want to defend the nastiness on which other theologians like Adloff pride themselves. It is only in a note that he ventures on a curious attempt to plead for a mild judgment on the manifestly shameful elements in Probabilism. "On the other hand, Probabilism, pure and simple, presents itself as a subject for scientific controversies, with a learned apparatus of pros and cons. A man's personal judgment, even if it is more favourable to the one view, in these cases will often not venture to give itself out as the assured expression of objective ethical truth, and so will be inclined to describe the less probable opinion as still probable." Here, too, it is evident that Mausbach is saving himself from answering the question, what is to be done where, instead of the theoretical controversy, we have a necessity for a practical decision of our own. Adloff answers it boldly. The Christian, he says, has in that case won back his freedom to choose the course

most convenient to himself. Mausbach is silent.

LIX. *The real use of others' help in arriving at a moral decision depends on our preserving our sense of responsibility.*

But despite the distress to which he is put by the Church's commendation of Probabilism, Mausbach still thinks he can clearly define wherein lies the advantage which a Catholic Christian has over us, owing to the instructions given by his Church, viz., in "the perception of the objective character of those moral ideals and laws to which the individual has to rise while he investigates them, and to which he has to subject himself." Our view, he says, is that "because morality is nothing more than the expression of the moral sense of the individual, and differs according to the nationalities, epochs and individuals concerned, it is therefore unnecessary to make long search for what is ethically the truth, at any rate unnecessary to search for it

with the help of others; *the moral discernment which we have fought for and won, gives us the solution.*" That is to say, he thinks that in the italicised words, which are a quotation from what I have said, he brings out the absurdity of what we defend. For Mausbach is of course very well aware that I hold, just as he does, that the question as to what is moral truth is a very pressing one and capable of solution. But as for those words in which he correctly cites my view, I may surely ask him whether he would venture to stand up for the opposite course in actual practice? I hope he would not. For if a man regards an action which is repugnant to the moral discernment which he has himself attained as nevertheless for some other reason the better course, he makes himself double-minded and is in consequence on the high road to hypocrisy. Even Mausbach will not wish to see this extinguishing of the inner light. In actual practice, then, there is no course left for him but to follow the principle which he regards

as so dangerous. He himself, too, will be ruled by his own moral judgment. Of course a Christian will let himself be guided in particular decisions by the authority of persons whom he credits with having a higher degree of clearness of moral vision than himself. In this act of trust he obeys his own moral sense if it really is an inward reverence for their moral strength. The consciousness of his own responsibility remains with him all through. If he has ceased to have that, he has lost himself in trying to save himself. He acts morally, not in surrendering his freedom, but in seeking to become by the help of others mentally clear and strong—in other words, free. He has this clearness and strength only if he is conscious of determining his acts by his own moral sense—that is, of wishing to be sincere.

LX. *How are we assured of the objective reality of the one moral law?*

We cannot vouch for the objective reality

of the moral laws, and that for a very simple reason. There is only *one* moral law, just as there is only one good disposition. But there is nothing that has for us such an objective reality as this one law. We call objective what we ourselves recognise to be real. But then we ourselves recognise that a will is rendered sincere only when it is turned in the direction of inward independence and of personal communion and intercourse with others.[1] These moral ideals and the moral law in which they are united—the command to love our neighbour as Jesus understood it—have for us therefore an indubitable objective reality. We can conceive of nothing further removed from arbitrariness and uncertainty than the law on which we can see depends the reality of the will and therefore of the actual life we live. Only in so far as we obey this law in our will have we really a will of our own, a will which does not achieve its own dissolution. So, then, it is only by practi-

[1] See note, p. 129.

cal conduct—by obedience to it—that we get a firm grasp of the objective reality of the moral law. That the idea of this law is a true idea we discern only by our will receiving from it its unifying and directing guidance, or, in other words, by obeying it. But then it is clear that no one can recognise the moral law in its objective reality or in its truth, who does not see in it the very thing which he himself, as an intelligent will, demands should be. Indeed we only need to remember what is the special sense which the word obedience receives when it is applied to morals. A man may allow himself, in spite of inward repugnance, to be compelled to an external act by a requirement laid upon him from without; he can render moral obedience only to such a requirement as by an act of his own will he sets before him as an expression of something unconditionally necessary. He acts morally only in an act of free or inward obedience; and such an obedience he can render only to that in

which his will discovers direction towards what he himself recognises as unconditionally necessary.

LXI. *The true Protestant attitude to traditional Church customs is the capacity to make fresh applications of their underlying principles.*

Therefore Mausbach's boast on behalf of Catholic morality is a conspicuous example of how utterly all understanding of morals has been overwhelmed in Rome's ecclesiastical organisation. He says: "The Catholic is fortunate enough not to be obliged to create all moral truths on his own account." Undoubtedly we, too, are acquainted with a spiritual possession which is of the utmost value for our moral life, and which we receive first of all through our connection with other persons. We know how to prize what we owe to custom and tradition as educative forces. Owing to this precious inheritance from our fathers we are able to enjoy a fuller spiritual

life than previous generations. But still for us the most important thing is to become spiritually alive, or, in other words, moral. And we become so, not by linking ourselves, however intimately, with custom and tradition. It is not the possession of good customs that makes us moral, but the capacity to go on building up those customs by making ever fresh applications of our own of the principles which underlie them. The strength needed for that has nothing to do with the mania for innovations. On the contrary, it grows out of faithfulness to the intellectual and spiritual possession we derive from tradition. We cannot honour it more highly than by crediting it with having been drawn from the depths of ethical character. By trying to comprehend this origin of any custom we create it afresh on our own account. In that process there is of necessity laid aside whetever elements have become things of the past for us, because we in our life of to-day can no longer connect them with what is eternal.

At the same time, much that was once laboriously striven for and won with difficulty must cease for us to constitute a limit to our capacity for rendering service. For it has to serve as a means for further progress to those who are actively living in the present. So customs on which we have been brought up are without remark altered and extended by the moral attitude in which we want to carry out the duty set us at the moment actually present. When an individual becomes in this way a source of life to the community and a factor in its growth, he is a moral being. If, on the other hand, the individual renounces the privilege of creating moral truth on his own initiative, he may perhaps be very useful in the attainment of worldly ends, but to the moral community he is of no service, and he himself is morally dead. The strength of his consciousness, which should urge him forward in the path of truthfulness, has then perished through sloth and insincerity within him.

LXII. *We all need moral help from others; but not the substitution of a ready-made list of duties for the results of our own thinking.*

To that result the Church of Rome contributes if she allows it to be said to her members by the mouth of her theologians: "You are so fortunate as not to be obliged to create all moral truths on your own initiative." For in this connection it means: "For you there are moral determinations which you have no need to win for yourselves; the Church your mother makes you a present of them." Mausbach knows by intuition how to describe the way in which a father-confessor who is skilled in Probabilism helps a man. "But, besides, he does not let every one go away helpless and puzzled with the advice to train a conscience for himself; anyone who knows the actual condition of the great majority of persons, even of the well-meaning among them, will not promise himself from this method of directing souls any results that

will bring much blessing. In any case a regard for what experienced directors of souls and theological authorities have thought on any point affords a better guarantee for the correct determination of a duty than would be secured by referring the immature or puzzled penitent to his own thoughts." But by this very description, in the course of which he thinks he may appeal to F. Paulsen's *Ethics*, he betrays his own want of understanding of morality. In the first place, it is not correct to say that only the great majority of persons have to be referred to the advice and help of others in their moral conflicts. We all need it. Without the fellowship of persons whom he credits with a spiritual connection with what is eternal the individual is weak. But above all, Mausbach fails to notice that such help in the moral conflict as he describes implies the abolition of morality. It is true the question is one of the correct determination of the duty, and doubtless for that we need the support of others by means of their example and their

moral judgment. But the duty itself arises from the application of our own moral sense to the particular situation. Thus the definition of the duty can result ultimately in all cases only from the individual's own thinking. According to the Catholic view, as Mausbach describes it, help in the moral conflict ought to supplant the man's own thinking, *i.e.*, in this case the strength of his own moral sense. In reality it ought to tend towards arousing and developing that strength. The aim of Romanist morals is that the formulas of duty which have been brought to a final shape in that Church should be as faithfully as possible fulfilled. The aim of real morality is that the individual should attain strength to fulfil the duty which ultimately no one can point out to him but himself alone. Mausbach speaks as if he knew nothing of educative or pastoral efforts which try to remove the hindrances to that inward independence to which a man is called. I have no doubt that he both knows and practises them. All the

same, he notices only the two alternatives of either letting a man go uncounselled or setting before him ready-made decisions of the practical question which troubles him. Undoubtedly it is the spirit of Romanist morality which prevents him from thinking of what as a morally instructed man he is otherwise familiar with. His Church keeps him to the practice of regarding a list of duties as the goodness which is required of us, duties arising from the nature of man and from his relation to God. If that is correct, then a man comes to know goodness by the correct and complete enumeration contained in that list; and a modest man will gladly admit that in this difficult business he requires the help of expert persons. Then all that remains for him to do is to get through his list of duties. The shrewd piety of the Church of Rome gives him only this one more piece of advice, that he should do something over and above this in order to be saved better and more expeditiously ("melius et expeditius"). But

this list of duties, which can be enumerated and can by special performances be exceeded, is not the goodness which is morally required of us. It is the will alone that is morally good, the will which has became conscious of being unalterably turned towards a task that is unending and then masters each set of circumstances into which it is brought by discovering in them the road to its goal.

LXIII. *His defence of Probabilism amounts to a boast that it relieves ordinary men of the moral conflict.*

Mausbach's defence of Probabilism, then, is in a certain sense 'serious.' One of the two moral evils in the matter he emphasises with special clearness as a blessing. In the practical application of Probabilism the individual's moral judgment, the combination which it alone can effect of the temporary factors with the eternal aim, is ruled out. For that purpose there has to be introduced this subjection to ecclesiastical decisions on

similar cases. The amusing praise of this method, on the ground that the variety of ecclesiastical decisions secures for the Christian the possibility of choosing out the course most convenient to himself, is not found in Mausbach. But the boasts he makes on the subject are no better. He says: The trouble and risk of the moral conflict for the knowledge of what is right is spared to the Christian by means of the Church, and this is of great value to the ordinary man; it is just by this condescension to spiritual need that the Church of Rome shows itself to be the Holy Church. The leading idea in this view is that the list of duties, which is the shape in which goodness presents itself to the Romanist theologians, will be fulfilled on these lines. But the whole of this obedience is morally valueless, if the man who achieves it is thereby doing not his own work but that of others. Mausbach might consider the question whether the only action which can be

called morally good be not one which is to the doer of it his own individual shaping of goodness, and whether the quickening into personal life of one single person be not something with the greatness of which the fulfilment of all merely conceivable general regulations cannot for a moment be compared. Perhaps it will then be clear to him why even his defence of Probabilism can only serve to bring to light the profound immorality of the thing, and to call attention to its foundation.[1]

[1 "Is it better to preach and to strive after ideals which in the nature of things are not fully attainable, or to lower such as can have no perfect fulfilment but in the imagination, and bring them well within the limits of practical attainment? To do the latter is to give up every one of the specially Christian ideals—to love those who love us, to forgive when we have no great cause for resentment, to speak the truth when it involves no sacrifice."—*Spectator*, June 13, 1903, p. 930.]

LXIV. *Mausbach appeals to Thomist maxims as assuring the inwardness of moral obedience because they find most of the decalogue in human nature; but the plea is not worth much, and Rome does not take it seriously.*

But now, over and above all this, that foundation is specially held up to us as the "wall of brass" which is to protect Romanist morality against our criticism. Mausbach thinks that the inwardness of obedience, which is the point on which we rightly insisted, is secured by nothing so much as by the great principles of the Thomist ethics. That might be quite possible, although those principles are to be found, even in the introductions to volumes which are accustomed to treat questions of morals like a law case, and to adduce careful proof of how one may evade duty and yet be saved. For it would not have been too much for the acuteness of an Escobar or a Busenbaum to connect a practical method of this kind

with any fundamental principles you please. But in this case there was no difficulty for them. These directors of souls really had a perfect right to appeal to Thomas Aquinas. Where the maxims of the Thomist ethics pass current, fertile soil is to be found for such growths. Such a mixture of Christian tendencies, ancient records, and ecclesiastical considerations may certainly provide nourishment for minds of very wide variety. It is therefore not to be wondered at if a modern thinker like Mausbach should discover in it a strong tendency in opposition to a treatment of morals as external. By Thomas, he says, by all great catholic thinkers, by all the moralists of to-day together, it is taught that in all essential points the law of morals is a law of nature (p. 74). "We Catholics do not overlook the fact that the law of morals is our law, the expression of our inmost nature." "And now, forsooth, this same catholic science regards the law of morals as a power outside us, which, while it may lay compulsion on

persons without spiritual stability, can convince no one" (p. 77).[1] We are glad to hear this outburst of indignation. For it shows us our opponent as a champion of the truth that what counts as of value in ethics is not anything that is attained by compulsion, but what has grown out of free conviction. In that case we should actually be at one in the most important point. We gladly acknowledge, too, that according to the prevailing Thomist tradition most of the commands in the decalogue are an expression of the reasoning nature of man—ultimately of the order of the universe which proceeds from the being of God. Undoubtedly there is included in the words a leaning towards the perception that man ought to know himself to be by his own nature under obligation to perform the requirement of morality. But Mausbach does not abide by the tendency so indicated; it would lead him, and that soon, right out of the Church of Rome. Immediately after-

[1] § 26, p. 149.

wards, on the following page, he writes: "The natural reason is capable of setting forth and maintaining the incomparable value, the sublimity and the unconditional obligation of morals, not by its own self-contemplation, but only by its acceptance of a higher lawgiver" (p. 78). Thus he denies that man is by his own nature under obligation to perform the requirements of morality. The obligation that will be practically efficient seems, according to his opinion, to be a consequence of the 'acceptance' of a divine lawgiver. But then the Thomist idea that the moral commands are an expression given to our reasoning nature has not much practical meaning for him. First, then, it has to be shown that it is entirely without practical meaning for the Church of Rome. Then follows the proof that that maxim comes quite short of giving clear expression to any such perception of morality as would be capable of practical efficiency. If the Church of Rome can estimate as a fundamental

principle, of value in deciding questions to-day, that idea of the Stoics, which was re-coined by Thomas, then that only shows that while she preserves the inheritance which has come down to her from the scholastic writers, she does not develop it.

LXV. *This philosophic theory of the decalogue fails to educate Romanists in the independent perception of goodness.*

Mausbach boasts that 'philosophic thought' as it is practised among them "can prove the inward truth and necessity of the requirements of morality." Indeed it would be a fine thing if philosophic morality, as it is followed in that quarter, should accomplish that feat. Whether that is the case or not we shall presently inquire. But first the question is whether the Church of Rome does really bring on to the path of moral perception the people whom she means to guide. But note that this insight into "the inward truth and necessity of the requirements

of morality" is not something merely for the learned. For without this perception there is absolutely no moral disposition. Anyone who has not got it can, it is true, accept requirements which have for others a moral meaning. He can even put himself to trouble to obey them; but at the same time he will try to let himself be burdened as little as possible by them. Against anything which we do not ourselves discern to be unconditionally necessary we can put ourselves inwardly on our guard, if it sets up a claim to determine our volition. If therefore we know nothing of that kind of volition — about which we no longer ask for what ends it is needful, because it appears to us to be of itself unconditionally necessary — then the worst that could happen has come upon us. We have then no will at all that would be able to overcome each case of inward resistance to it; we have no moral disposition. In this want of stability the man who is conscious of it recognises his own

spiritual annihilation. But the Church of Rome keeps those that belong to her fixed in this miserable condition. She does so, in spite of all her zeal for urging men to good works, because she fails to understand that what is moral is in essence what is unconditionally necessary, freely recognised and therefore really willed. It is of no use whatever to say that the law of morality is the expression of our own inmost nature, if we have no experience of the process by which the man who is ripening to this point of decision can make clear to himself what is the one single kind of volition on his part by means of which he may resolve every doubt as to his spiritual union with the Eternal. Then that commonplace—that the moral man is spiritually at one with the law which determines his will—remains practically of no effect. How much that is the case in the Church of Rome is shown by Probabilism. Mausbach has not denied that in this theory the law is not conceived of as the form

which the intelligent will gives itself by means of its own free discernment. That is perfectly plain. He who in his struggle for a clear moral decision thinks he is at liberty to give up what he himself holds to be right, because others tell him the opposite, is characterless. The assertion of the Roman Catholic moralists, that the Catholic who allows himself to be won over to the practice of Probabilism is nevertheless always following his conscience, would sound like conscious mockery were we not aware that by the term conscience they do not understand just the inward sense of obligation to that goodness which a man has by his own perceptions apprehended as the one thing of eternal value.[1]

[1] Compare Busenbaum, Medulla, Münster, 1659, p. 5. Parum refert quod opposita sententia ipsi operanti videatur probabilior, cum operans aliam regulam eamque certam habeat quam sequatur, scilicet hanc, quod in dubiis quisque operari possit secundum sententiam quam viri docti ut probabilem et in praxi tutam defendant. *Neque tunc agit contra propriam conscientiam.*

LXVI. *The conception of duty as an invasion of natural freedom shows that Thomist maxims have not taught the inwardness of obedience.*

The substitution of merely legal for moral conduct is seen in its most childish form in the practical culmination of Probabilism, which Mausbach obstinately glosses over. Others, such as Adloff and Göpfert,[1] are more outspoken on this point. They even ground their Probabilism on the principle that the freedom given us by God takes precedence of the obligation laid on us by the moral law. Göpfert says we are not at liberty to sacrifice this "principle of gospel freedom," and so we have to admit that only a command unaffected by any reasonable doubt can rob a man of the possession of his liberty, *i.e.*, of his freedom from law. He adds that even the man's own judgment in favour of the rightness of a particular moral requirement does not take away his right to such a freedom from law, so long as he is confronted with other people's

[1] *Moraltheologie,* vol. i. ed. 3, 1901, p. 168.

judgments which he cannot refute. Thus the fundamental principles of the law of personal property are here unhesitatingly applied to the relation in which a man stands to the requirements of morality. The moral requirement is conceived of *as an invasion of the man's rights*, against which defence is permissible until all doubt has vanished as to whether God—as against whom the man has no protection in his private right to freedom from law—has really required it. It is true that Mausbach says that this right to freedom from law has reference only to *præcepta particularia*, the removal of which would not affect a man's obligation to keep the general law of morals or his destiny, as being a creature, to live for God.[1] But all that helps us very little. Mausbach has no need whatever to lay special emphasis on the fact that, according to the Catholic view as well as ours, a man's decision that at a given moment some particular duty does not lie before him, does not upset

[1] P. 88.

the general principle that he must obey the moral law or the will of God. What seems to us so intolerable, is, of course, not that the question whether a particular duty lies before us at a given moment can be raised, and can be answered in the negative. What we regard as immoral is the way in which the question is treated according to the teaching of the Church of Rome. The moral idea is that the intelligent will makes practical use of its freedom by seeking, recognising and obeying its duty. The Romanist idea is that the will is at liberty to defend its freedom against the requirement of duty which comes to it from without. In this idea the duty is conceived of, not as a product of the free will, but as a limitation of it. How deeply this legalist perversion of the notion of morality has eaten its way in, is shown by the probabilist principle that our will does not need to take the direction in which our own discernment points us, if we find that decisions clothed with ecclesiastical authority permit the contrary.

LXVII. *Mausbach belittles casuistry, and calls attention to the eternal ideas as Rome's basis for morality.*

It is true Mausbach tries to diminish the importance of this probabilist rule by pointing out the subordinate value of the whole system of casuistry in Catholicism. He says casuist morals are not the *summa moralis* (p. 20). The Catholic science of ethics, including that of the casuists, is founded, he says, on the most profound conviction of the eternal significance and sanctity of morality. It deduces not only the fundamental obligation of all morality, but also a whole series of special regulations, from the nature of things, from that inward necessity of the ideas, which is independent even of the arbitrary choice of God (p. 35).

LXVIII. *But these are generalities not affecting practice.*

But it is not in such generalities that the character of this conception of morals shows itself, but in the way in which the decision as

to duty is sought for and formed, *i.e.*, in actions. For the sense in which those generalities are accepted becomes plain only by their effects upon the will. What sense can be attached in Romanist ethics to the grand words about the inward necessity of the ideas on which the fundamental obligation of morality rests, if they permit men in deciding on their line of duty to obey, not their own moral discernment, but the judgment of other people? What are we to understand by the sanctity of morality when that permission is imparted along with a reminder of the freedom which also has its rights, and which is at liberty to use those decisions of others which may be favourable to it?

LXIX. *Finally, he finds in Probabilism a clemency befitting a Church otherwise strict.*

Finally, Mausbach defends his Church and her denial of moral earnestness in her practice as follows: "Just because in the primary questions of moral life she develops the

greatest energy and the greatest wealth of plans to help men, she can the more readily allow a certain clemency to prevail in questions of a secondary kind." So he calls it 'clemency' when the Church of Rome allows Christians by means of Probabilism to evade their duty, which always implies obligation to follow one's own moral discernment. The Church of Rome can, he says, allow this clemency to prevail, because she is strong in her inward assurance. But to give men the means to escape from their duty and follow their inclinations is never clemency, but either weakness or wickedness. In this case it is certainly weakness, that is to say, either weakness or incapacity for earnest thought about the serious truth of morality.

LXX. *To belittle the effect of Probabilism is to forget the serious effects of neglecting our own moral judgment, whatever grand principles we profess.*

The Probabilism of the Church of Rome

poisons her methods in morals ; for it is on the watch for all cases of a decision involving the duty of moral growth. When it begins to be clear to us that there are in our previous conduct shortcomings which we ought to overcome, our sight becomes specially sharp for everything that may lend support to our old way of living. But the Church of Rome lends her aid to this resistance of a life which has its inward tendency already fixed. She shows the man how to save himself that step of progress. Mausbach has never once tried to deny that that is the real meaning of Probabilism. But in that case he has no right to speak as if Probabilism were of only small significance and confined to rare cases. If Probabilism is admitted, the principle is given up that the goodness which is really obligatory for a man can be defined for him in every case only by means of his own moral judgment. If we once allow ourselves to be persuaded that we are at liberty to arrive at the nature of our act of volition by means of counsels that come

to us from external sources and not to produce it ourselves, then we have lost the sureness and the strength of our moral sense. The Church of Rome would fain sing the praises of the "inward truth and necessity" of morality. But she does not regard it as needful that the individual should be sincere in his perception of this inward truth and necessity, or should find his way to it with an independent mind. In this case it seems that the great principles are not to guide practice but to find excuses for it. Because the principles are so sublime the clemency is regarded as permissible which allows weak men in actual practice to deny the principles in case after case.

LXXI. *The recognition of the binding nature of moral law depends only on a man's own recognition of its intrinsic goodness.*

But spiritual instability, when a man resigns himself to it, makes its presence known even in the way in which he conceives the first principles of morals. The man will be ready

to assert their inward truth and necessity, but yet he hesitates to give them actual expression. The 'inward truth' of the moral ideas—that can only mean that they carry in themselves their right to pass current, and do not receive it only through their connection with something else. A man recognises them as being what they really are when he recognises them as the eternal foundation of all life that is destined for independence or personality. On the other hand, he completely loses sight of them if he thinks of them as themselves in their turn dependent on some other entity which has become otherwise known to him. He who does not apprehend goodness as an idea independent of all others does not conceive of it at all. Therefore it is possible to establish the reality of the moral ideas only by expounding their content and explaining what they do for the lifting up of man's life to the independence which belongs to personality. For as soon as you traced the value of morality back to something else which was not in its

turn a particular expression given to goodness, you would be setting this other thing in the place which in your own moral sense you can reserve only for goodness itself. This mistake would also be made if we were to conceive of our will as connected with goodness only by some motive distinguishable from goodness itself. By so doing we should be giving out that this motive was the really supreme force within us, which was therefore, as being the thing of unconditional value, reckoned by ourselves superior to goodness itself. Surely that makes it a settled point that between the moral will and goodness itself no other power ought to intervene in order to bestow upon goodness, as something new, the force by which it lays the will under obligation. A law which had need of that addition to it would not be the expression of goodness. If we have come to see that, we have also laid hold of the thought that the moral will gives itself its own law by means of its own perception of what is uncon-

ditionally necessary, or, in other words, is autonomous.

LXXII. *Mausbach attacks the Kantian doctrine of 'Autonomy,' because he confuses it with something else.*

"But surely with that admission," says Mausbach, "all that has been brought into the field against the Kantian 'autonomy' advances in full force against Herrmann as well." Certainly it does all range itself against us too, but force it has none. For a man morally in earnest will speak against the Kantian autonomy only so long as he fails to understand it. Mausbach, for instance, imagines to himself under that title something which I, too, should reject. He says that a man could be the final motive of moral will only if he were himself also the aim, only if he were himself the unconditioned good, the eternally valid, and so on. That is, he thinks that what is expressed by the idea of autonomy

is that a man has to see the inviolable rule for his will in what he himself is in virtue of his experience. That is, of course, the fundamental idea of Aristotelian and Stoic ethics which has found acceptance with Thomas. In that the Catholic theologians follow their master, and, like him, are determined to limit this idea, because otherwise it would be in glaring contradiction with the Christian view of life. For the Christian judgment on the matter does not demand that a man should follow the impulses of his natural life, but that he should make them servants to a higher power, and should by means of this obedience make his life holy. It is therefore easy to understand that in the unlimited autonomy—without which, according to Kant, no moral sense is conceivable—they also suspect something unchristian.

LXXIII. *But the Kantian 'Autonomy' only expresses the need for a man to follow what he himself sees to be unconditionally necessary.*

But the Kantian idea of autonomy asserts

something quite different from the regulative significance of human nature, such as it has become by experience. It is quite alien to the Kantian ethic to trace back morality to something given by Nature. Its historical significance lies precisely in this — that it establishes the distinction between the contents of the moral ideas, and all in Nature that is capable of demonstration; and in that way carries out the distinction between ethics on the one hand and psychology and all natural science in general on the other. Kant's doctrine has not the simple meaning that man does not need to have anything told him, because from the inclinations which prevail in his own nature he can derive the counsels necessary for his will. It does not care to dispute the fact that without what tradition gives him no man can develop. Nor does it involve any contraction of the idea that God alone is good, that He is the reality and power of the will that is really good. The Christian has no need to fear

lest his faith in God as the lawgiver should be threatened by the Kantian doctrine of the autonomy of the moral will. For that doctrine is not to be taken as in any sense a speculation about the origin of the moral law. On the contrary, it is meant to give expression to the meaning of that law.[1] If you take note of that, it is surely not difficult to see that in this doctrine Kant is really the interpreter of the moral sense. It is to be expected of every honest man, that after a little con-

[1] Adloff makes this mistake (*Kath. Moral und Sittlichkeit*, 1901, pp. 43–47). He thinks the idea of moral autonomy is answered by a reference to the fact that "reason is not free, but limited by *objective truth*." But that is just what the idea of autonomy means, that a man is brought under inward obligation by nothing but the truth that he himself has recognised. In that case we must of course understand by the words "objective truth" in that connection, not an assertion or requirement which is forced upon a man, and the acceptance of which would in any case be mere arbitrariness. If you understand by objective truth what a man really makes sure of on his own initiative as being true—that is to say, that sort of volition which is of eternal worth —understood in this sense autonomy means nothing other than the inward obligation to this very "objective truth."

sideration he should recognise in this doctrine what he himself thinks, if he is still standing morally erect. He cannot but perceive that every course of action is immoral in which he does not follow what he prescribes to himself as the unalterable rule of his will. Anyone who loses sight of this guiding star is inwardly unstable, or, in other words, immoral. If we are not speculating on the nature of man, but simply want to explain the idea of morality, we shall not speak of man's autonomy, but of the autonomy of man as a moral being. But among men of moral earnestness there is one thing understood as self-evident, namely, that a man's conduct is moral only if he obeys what he sets before himself as being unconditionally necessary. For instance, a man who takes no advantage of an opportunity for dishonesty that comes in his way is acting morally in so doing, if the real reason for his conduct is his own perception of what is unconditionally valid. A Christian ought to be led into the

full clearness of this perception from his youth up; that is to say, to discern that only cordial communion and intercourse with others can be conceived of as the eternally necessary aim, and that only a will set in that direction can be conceived of as firm in itself or sincere. If then his honesty is the expression of a will of this kind, it is a moral action. If, on the other hand, the conduct which according to the law's standard is honest, has not taken its rise in a moral sense under the direction of that perception, it is not moral, but only legal, perhaps very selfish and cowardly, and so immoral.

LXXIV. *Kantian 'Autonomy' is misunderstood by others too;* e.g., *by Carl Jentsch.*

I hope, therefore, that Mausbach makes war upon the idea of autonomy only because he has missed the fact that nothing else is meant by it but an explanation of what the requirements of morality expect of us. It is required of us that we should of ourselves

both recognise the law and will it. For then only do we render moral obedience, when we can say to ourselves that the law itself is the unalterable object of our volition. The misfortune of failing altogether to understand this idea—and in consequence to understand morals in general—is of course shared by the Catholic theologian with many who have either never belonged to the Church of Rome or who have long ago separated from her. Even so acute an observer of human conditions as Carl Jentsch imagines to himself under the term autonomous morality—which, after all, is simply the morality of the moral sense—something in the highest degree peculiar. In one passage[1] he rejects it, and in another

[1] Compare *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 6th Dec. 1902, No. 338. "To obey God, and in obedience to Him to bear heavy burdens, that is the best and most useful kind of reverence toward God. Whoever practises it is of course despised by the apostles of autonomous morality. I am unable all the same to regard this autonomous morality as so very exalted, because if you look carefully into it you generally find that the 'thou shalt' of the categorical imperative by no means arises out of the secret depths of your own soul, but from the catechism class, or the barrack-room

passage he claims it for himself and other 'free' people, though perhaps with a vein of irony.[1]

lesson, or out of fear of paternal thrashings, and I cannot find that this drill-sergeant morality is loftier than the noble moral sense of the beautiful soul that sacrifices itself, because it is its joy to sacrifice itself, and that feels itself insulted by the coarse 'Thou shalt.'"

On this I remark, first, that an autonomous morality which despises the obedience which is rendered for God's sake I should regard, not as exalted, but as silly. In no way can an earnest autonomous morality show itself more powerful than in the obedience of a Christian who really for his God's sake bears heavy burdens. In the second place, an earnest autonomous morality will certainly not deduce the categorical imperative from "the secret depths of its own soul," nor yet, it is true, from the only other sources which Carl Jentsch is willing to acknowledge, but from the simple independent thought of a morally earnest man about himself. In the third place, the soul which "feels itself insulted by the coarse 'thou shalt'" may be beautiful, but at any rate it is also very empty-headed. Perhaps Carl Jentsch in order to become a little clearer as to the meaning of "thou shalt," may consider what is said in the Epistle to the Romans xiii. 8.

It is much to be regretted that in one of the best German papers a distinguished author can speak in so confused a manner of a subject which is of more importance than any other for the vigour and healthiness of our national life.

[1] Compare *Grenzboten*, 1902, No. 42, p. 1661. "We free people, we who think we stand in need of no

LXXV. *Thomist ethic refers the validity of the moral commands, not to their intrinsic value, but to their correspondence with man's nature.*

But in the 'great principles' of the Thomist ethic it appears very clearly why a man's own discernment of the rightness of the moral command is not valued in Romanist Christianity as an essential element of a really moral attitude. It is said that the moral commands have their origin in God; that most of them are by the inworking of God's nature so impressed upon the reasoning creation that a natural inclination to them is established, and the distinction between good and evil is rendered possible. Thus the unconditional

authority in the sphere of ethics, and along with Kant claim autonomy for ourselves, ought not to judge of the needs of the masses from our own." I do not see why the man who is becoming morally free should on that account lose the power of intelligently discerning that he has very great need of authority in his moral conflict. Among the masses there is no one who ought not to become autonomous, and there exists upon earth no being called to autonomy that is not appointed to receive help from authority.

rightness of the requirement of morality is not explained to us as resting on what the requirement itself contains. Inward clearness of vision and purity of thought are sought for not in the perception that this one thing alone can be conceived of as the unconditional rule for our own will. But comfort is found in the idea that most of the moral commands stand out in the reasoning nature of man as expressions of the nature of God. The opinion is cherished that we may comfort ourselves all the more with that idea, because, forsooth, it is the Christian idea.

LXXVI. *But the Christian so knows God as to recognise His will in what is intrinsically good.*

But the Christian understands surely by the term the nature of God nothing else than the omnipotence of the good Will. But if that is the Christian idea of God, then we enter into spiritual connection with the Christian's God only when we apprehend goodness as that

which alone possesses the right to be supreme in our wills. Without understanding goodness in this way, without the beginning of a moral sense, no one can become conscious of our God or understand His revelation of Himself. Whoever, then, wishes to speak of God in the Christian sense, must be able to render such an account of the meaning and the rights of the moral law as does not involve a recurrence over again to the idea of God.

### LXXVII. *Though Thomas could not see that, Rome to-day ought to.*

But such an account of them is not to be found in the Thomist ethic. That is no reproach to Thomas. But the case is different with a Christian Church which even to-day still shares this shortcoming and will not hear of a moral perception independent of all religious authority, or of an independent conscience, as a condition of sincerity in religion. By that she proves that she has very little share in that intellectual and spiritual development

to which Thomas contributed by what he handed down many centuries ago. For in the most important aim of the intellectual and spiritual life she allows herself to be supported by ideas that have long been as dead as stones.

LXXVIII. *A more serious failure on Thomas' part is the lack of any unifying principle in moral law, which he divides into commands of varying source and value.*

But we must call the attention of Romanist theology—which sets up these very ideas "as a wall of brass" in opposition to us—to yet another shortcoming which is of more serious weight. In the ethics of Thomas a mistake occurs which cannot be counted merely an error of theory, but is a symptom of want of moral clearness of vision. There is no combination of the requirements of morality into one single idea. Naturally it is occasionally touched in Thomas' writings in connection with New Testament expressions. But it

does not influence his own view. Mausbach himself refers to the fact, that according to the Thomist doctrine most of the commandments of morals are an expression of the nature of man, as if it were something quite beyond cavil. Then surely, according to this doctrine, there are other commandments of which that is not the case.[1] So, then, a man would adopt a different inward position in reference to the latter from that which he would take up to the former. The commandments which are foreign to man are called by Thomas *divine* commandments in the narrower sense. Under their guidance the human will has manifestly a character differing from what it has under the guidance of the commandments which are reckoned part of the moral 'law of nature' in man. In regard to the positive divine commandments man has nothing left for him to do but to obey them without understanding their rights over him. Adloff, too,

[1] Compare also Adloff, *Kathol. Moral u. Sittlichkeit*, 1901, pp. 46, 47.

explains that no other reason can be given for their binding character except God's free will. With these commandments, which require an obedience without any understanding of them, there are associated the further commandments of the Church. For "he that heareth you heareth Me." So while a man ought to recognise in other commandments the attraction of his 'inmost nature,' in the case of the positive divine commands and the numerous commands of the Church he does not get so far as to understand the rights which they have over him in virtue of their contents. The harm of this would be less serious if Thomas esteemed the commands, whose rights over him a man understands, as being the proper expression of goodness and obedience to them as being real morality. But that he does not do, but abides by the view that man has claims laid upon him by various laws which he cannot bring together into one homogeneous idea. He even goes so far as to assert that the commands which are impressed

upon the nature of man by the eternal order of the universe, extend only to the external acts, not to the inward.[1] So the process of realising the inwardness of morality by means of the idea that morals form part of our inmost nature did not in any case succeed in making much progress with Thomas.

### LXXIX. *Some strange propositions show his lack of this unifying principle.*

Thomas's declaration[2] that God as Lord over all could make the premeditated killing of an innocent man, even outside the case of warfare, to be no murder, and carnal intercourse with another man's wife to be no adultery, is suggested, it is true, by Old Testament passages. But still it betrays how far away he is from perceiving that the one unifying Power over all can only be the personal power of Goodness, which is for the

[1] S. Th. ii. 1, Qu. 91. 4.

[2] S. Th. ii. 1, Qu. 94. 5, and 100. 8.

man of piety no enigmatical caprice, but profoundly comprehensible to him.

LXXX. *Especially he fails to understand Christ's and Paul's unification of the moral law as love to our neighbour.*

Finally, it seems to me to be above all else significant of the want of moral clearness on the part of Thomas that he can attach so little importance to the words of Jesus about the greatest commandment in the law. He has not thoroughly learnt the lesson that in that saying the oneness of the law is so set forth as that the commandment to love God, as much as that to love our neighbour, gives separate expression to the whole law, and that therefore each of the two should fill the whole moral sense of a man. The reason why Paul is right in his saying about the practice of love to our neighbour being the fulfilment of the whole law, remained a secret to him, and does so to the theology which is led by this "prince of men." For Thomas holds it to be more

meritorious to fulfil the command to love God in itself alone than to fulfil it in the command to love our neighbour.[1] According to his way of thinking, the service of God is loftier than moral earnestness and moral loyalty.

LXXXI. *Hence in his followers there is lack of understanding of the rights of morality, and lack of a unified moral sense.*

From these examples it appears that by the term goodness Thomas does not mean a will brought to unity, *i.e.*, does not mean a moral disposition. He thinks he can do what is good with a divided heart, by obedience to ideas which have for him no unity. The Roman Catholic Christian, following his track, tries so to live his life as to obey several masters, to whom, it is true, he always attaches the same name. So, then, the Thomist ethic does not make it clear in what way a man of

[1] S. Th. ii. 2, Qu. 182. 2. "Deum diligere secundum se est magis meritorium quam diligere proximum."

moral earnestness answers to himself the question as to the rightness of the ideas of morality. In the first place, it thinks it can get rid of the question by a reference to the being or to the will of God, whereas no one can in real truth hold the religious idea that God speaks in the requirements of morals unless he has previously recognised by means of the contents of the moral ideas their unconditional validity for his own will. Here, then, the clearing of the moral consciousness is impeded by an idea ostensibly religious. In the second place, moral understanding in general is only possible in proportion as one attains to a will that is in itself single, or, in other words, to a moral sense. But the Thomist ethic hinders this inward focussing of the thought, by spreading the error that not merely in his life as a citizen, but in morals, a man is under obligation to various laws which he himself cannot bring together into one single idea. But if we do not attain to being led by one unifying

idea recognised as of unconditional validity, we are also lacking in purity of moral sense and in the strength of will that is superior to circumstances.

LXXXII. *But ecclesiastical teaching is often prevented from bearing its full fruit.*

If within Catholic Christendom evidences of moral earnestness are nevertheless to be found in abundance, that is not due to the ecclesiastical teaching of morality. A remarkable resistance to that guidance towards the loss of inward independence—in other words, towards what is immoral—is furnished by recollections of Scriptural ideas which, in spite of all, are bound up with the religious traditions of the Church of Rome. If the Catholic Christian is brought up to do "all to the glory of his God," he learns in the life and doctrine of his ecclesiastical communion so much certainly of the God of the prophets and of Jesus Christ, that in the effort to serve that God the beginnings

of a moral sense can be formed. But when this seed of inward independence wants to germinate, it encounters the opposition of the Church, which will not tolerate the vitality of the individual, and for that reason disseminates through the world the myth that it is always impossible for men to be vitalised.

LXXXIII. *Rome hates individualism, especially in the form of an independent moral sense, and appeals to the need many have of tradition. But we all need tradition, yet not so as to destroy our independence.*

The whole strength of Romanist Christendom is directed ultimately against the movement according to which human society grows richer by letting men go their own way. The Church of Rome cannot join in this universal tendency of civilisation, because she herself is becoming by means of it, not stronger, but superfluous. In individuals, she holds, there should be no certainty of faith. For any one

who possesses that, will soon take no further interest in the Church's assertion that her sacraments, by being meekly received, constitute for a man guarantees of salvation. But above all, in her view, there ought for this reason to be no independence of the moral sense. For whoever has recognised that the fundamental requirement of morality is that he should dictate to himself what is right, will certainly long for earnest men who can help him to become clear on moral questions. But he will see the power of evil in a Church which sets up the claim that he must follow her guidance, and wants for that reason to take away from him this fundamental requirement of morality. Mausbach, as is the practice of his Church, appeals to our actual experience of the weakness of men,[1] in order that he may get rid of the requirement that man should dictate to himself what is right. In this way he justifies Probabilism; it has an effect socially, in so far "as it

[1] See p. 335.

maintains one uniform lower limit for what is moral and Christian in the nation."[1] "It is a misapprehension of the soul of man, and would, if practically carried out in a larger circle, immediately lead to the most disastrous fiasco, if, as a condition of a man's moral independence, it was proposed to impose on him the duty of finding within himself all the rules to regulate his actions." Of course we offer no objection to the assertion that a man has to see in the moral ideas already developed by others and handed on to him by tradition, a help beyond all price. They will be capable of affording him the greater assistance if he has really achieved sufficient clearness of moral vision to see in them commandments from God. If Mausbach here seems to recognise this moral need of humanity for "wider circles" only, that is not to be taken too precisely. It is self-evident, indeed, that there is no narrower circle of moral stalwarts who are able to do

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

without this help. It is easy to understand that the Church of Rome would set it down as destructive of respect for traditional ordinances if the summons to moral independence were addressed to all persons. All the more is it the duty of those who wish to keep back from no man the pure truth of morality, to furnish proof that they do not allow others to outdo them in proper reverence for inherited ordinances in morals.

LXXXIV. *Both Christ and the Apostle Paul bid us judge for ourselves what is right; but Rome persuades men it is not for them.*

But certainly we ought not to value this inheritance so highly as to let it amount to a limitation of our moral independence. We render moral obedience to a commandment, that comes to us as a traditional one, only when we have first produced it in our own moral sense as a requirement set up by ourselves. Therefore we must challenge all those in the nation who are not yet free, including

our brothers who are still bound to Rome: Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? Our Romanist opponents would then of course be angry, and many Protestants too, such as the theologians of the *Kreuzzeitung* and the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*. They would say it was un-Christian; that a Christian asks not what is his own moral perception, but what are the commandments of his God as they are found in the Holy Scriptures. A man, they will say, would be trying to thrust God from His throne, if he wished to dictate of himself to himself what was right. Such indignation is certainly none too Christian. For from Jesus' own lips we hear that question, "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke xii. 57). And Paul (Rom. xii. 2) lays it down as the task for the whole Christian life to fix for oneself what is the will of God, what is the good.[1] The change of mind in virtue

[1 Rom. xii. 2, μεταμορφούσθε εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν υμᾶς τὶ τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον. "Be transformed so as to judge what the will of God is, viz. the good, the well-pleasing, and the perfect."]

of which the Christian becomes separate from the world depends, according to the apostle's view, on his accomplishing that task. So then it is the nature of the natural life to obey laws which are imposed upon it. On the other hand, the man who has become alive in the true sense, and has therefore separated from the natural life, shows his new nature by dictating to himself what he ought to do. *All the requirements uttered in the fifth chapter of Matthew can be fulfilled only by a man who imposes them upon himself.* That is true above all of the love of our neighbour as Jesus expounds it. If this love is by itself the fulfilling of the law, then it forms part of the doing of what is good that a man should himself recognise goodness as such. For surely that is indeed the nature of love, that what she does should be an expression found by herself for her own will. From that it surely follows that the moral will of which Jesus and Paul speak, the will which really does what is good, is an autonomous will. But then it also

stands proven that the Church of Rome by trying with her Probabilism to take away from men this *duty* of becoming independent, surrenders the understanding of morality which is disclosed to the Christian Church. She exercises an immoral influence because she instructs men in the methods of escaping from the perceptions which force themselves on every man who has been roused to moral earnestness, and especially on Christians. For the claim that each individual ought to recognise goodness for himself, or, in other words, to be his own lawgiver, can be understood to be an expression of the fundamental requirement of morals by all who are really touched within by the ideal of love to our neighbour. If, then, Christians are being persuaded that the inward independence, which only their own discovery of what is of eternal value can ever give them, is impossible for them on account of their infirmity, and that to strive after it implies lack of piety, then the beginnings of that muscular strength which

makes a man stand upright are being checked in them, and they themselves are being degraded from the realm of living men, who are something in themselves, down to the mass whose portions are appointed them from without.

### LXXXV. *The impoverishing influence of Rome on the nations, and its cause.*

At present the historical significance of the Church of Rome consists in the fact that she is changing the millions, who really belong to her, out of individual personalities, who by means of the requirement of morality were placed upon their own feet and were set upon the quest for fellowship, back again into the mass in which there is no independence and consequently no fellowship either. She hinders men from finding their spiritual union with the eternal, their moral convictions, or their faith in God, by means of their consideration of the realities in the midst of which they stand and of the future that should arise

out of the action of their own will. In this way she diffuses abroad a certain crippling of the consciousness, whose results are all the more destructive the more strenuous are the claims which the life of the civilised nations makes upon the weak energies of individuals. Where the Church of Rome is now really supreme the nations are being impoverished. But that is due, not, as most people readily imagine, to the robbery of the national exchequer by the dead hand. Far worse is the fact that the Church of Rome everywhere quenches the fire without whose creative strength even the economical and political life of the nations soon flags.

LXXXVI. *Mausbach's explanations of the backwardness of the Roman Catholic nations.*

Even Mausbach lets it be seen that he sees and laments that fact. But he traces the backwardness of the Catholic world to other causes. He utters warnings against narrow prejudices, ease, and despondency, which lead

to a shirking of the tasks required by civilisation. Still it does not escape his observation that a phenomenon of such wide extent is not to be traced to acts of negligence and perversity, which may be dealt with by exhortations. Naturally we cannot accept the assertion that the groups of humanity that are especially subject to the Church of Rome were from the first afflicted with such shortcomings in their intellectual nature. On the contrary, we cannot surely forget that in numerous great men the abundance of their overflowing genius has been a light to humanity. No one will seriously affirm that this natural force of mind has to-day withered away in the Latin nations. It can still show itself grandly. It is there, but to the great loss of general culture its development is hindered among the masses of these nations. Even Mausbach does not escape from the inference that the striking depression, which weighs upon the life of those nations at the present day, seems to be connected with their

Romanist Christianity. He conceives it to be so himself. In society as influenced by Protestantism he finds "an untrammelled setting free of all intellectual forces for the combat for things earthly," and at the same time "a struggle to make life something in which may at last be found the highest aim of life, absolute goodness." From that fact men's efforts receive, he thinks, a powerful intensity; but at the same time there are introduced into their life the profoundest contradictions, vacillations and disappointments. On the other hand, among Catholics, he says, in the first place, "thought on the highest questions is calmed"; in the second place, "its endeavour (as something absolute) is directed towards what belongs to the other world." From that, he thinks, it easily follows that "in progressive energy of thought and of the spirit of worldly business Catholics are behind the modern man." We are ready to set it to the credit of Mausbach's polemical zeal that in his description of the Protestant way of

things he asserts something that is impossible. That all the intellectual forces throw themselves unfettered into the combat for things earthly is surely not at all possible, if at the same time an effort is put forth to make life something that shall be part of an absolute good. For the absolute good belongs in its nature to the other world. It can be part of a man's life only in so far as it furnishes the guiding point which gives unity to all a man's efforts. If the inward life of a Protestant is directed to a struggle after that end, then it is manifestly turned in the direction of the other world.

LXXXVII. *In suggesting that true religion concentrates Roman Catholics' interest on the other world to their loss in this, he betrays his misconception of religion.*

It can never fail to be so wherever in Protestantism real religion is at all alive. But Mausbach is evidently bent on escaping by the assertion that Catholicism, being a religion

really turning in the direction of the other world, easily alienates men so powerfully from their worldly interests that their economic progress suffers in the process. We must look a little more accurately into this representation of the matter. Undoubtedly religion can produce that effect in a man. It can do so when, and only when, there arises for him out of his own religious experiences a calling in this world for which he is bound, and is ready, to stake his whole being. When he recognises it to be the purpose of his earthly existence that the powerful religious life within him should lay hold upon others, it will be his 'meat' so to labour as to kindle a fire on earth. He will get no satisfaction for himself from other interests in the spheres of intellectual or material culture. But even in this special case, religion, while producing separation from these particular worldly interests of earthly life, does not in any way produce estrangement from what belongs to this earth as a whole. Real religion is

never a fleeing from what is real—in the midst of which the man of piety knows that God has placed him—but a comprehension of what is real and a living in the midst of it with the utmost earnestness possible. In his attempt to explain the backwardness of the Catholics in the world's combat by their devotion to the higher aims of religion, Mausbach himself betrays the conception both of religion and of morals which is in truth the cause that among these millions of people the natural strength of the intellect is held in subjection.

LXXXVIII. *True religion makes a man find a voice of God to him in this present world, and he uses the world well.*

In the first place, any such turning of a man in the direction of the other world as does not serve to fill his earthly relationships with new life is not an effect of pure religion. This result can be produced only by a false form of religion. Pure devotion to the omnipotent

God will always lead to God's world becoming to the man, not a matter of complete indifference, but important in a new sense. It is true, the man who is religiously aroused will be set free from the aims he followed in this world before. But in the new relationship to God of which he is now conscious, he grasps a new meaning of the world as well. It becomes to him a work of God wrought for him, by which he is to understand what God wishes to say to him. But in that case it is evidently not conceivable that any one should be capable of greater enthusiasm in apprehending earthly things, or in making cordial use of them, than the religious man who truly longs after God. If, then, the Catholic religion as Mausbach understands it so binds the man to a world beyond that it makes him in consequence more easy-going with regard to what is of this earth, more comfortable, less forceful, then its world beyond is not the living God Himself or complete experience of His rule, but is a world of dreams in which a man is

estranged from himself and in consequence becomes enervated.

LXXXIX. *Mausbach confuses the calm of conviction won (which is life), with the lazy calm of ceasing to think.*

But, in the second place, Mausbach lets also us see how this mis-shaping of religion comes to pass. He betrays it by boasting of the pious Catholic that his thought on the highest questions is calmed. Without a certain calm of conviction, faith, of course, lacks force. How strongly that is emphasised in Protestantism itself is very well known. If, then, Mausbach contrasts the Catholic's calm thought on the highest questions with the Protestant way of things, he evidently means not that calm of conviction which gives a man strength for the highest endeavour, strength to deny himself; what he really means is such a calming of his thoughts as frees the man from that unrest and those endeavours without which a living personal

conviction is not possible. Only on one condition can the reality of what is meant by truly religious ideas be manifested to a man. He must be brought to think seriously in two directions: first, on the eternal law of his will, or on his future; secondly, on the intrinsic worth of his being undeniably most important at the present moment. Then alone is he in the spiritual condition in which God's word can become intelligible to him. If he then experiences God's revelation of Himself to him he certainly attains by it a marvellous confidence, which in the Christian attains a further priceless support by means of the glorious witness to that revelation which we receive in the Holy Scriptures from men of clearness of moral vision, to whom also Jesus Christ had become the all-important fact in their world. That confidence characterising a religious faith can also be called a calm attitude of thought about the highest questions. But this calm is enjoyed only when accompanied by the sort of endeavour in which

a man pulls himself together, shakes himself free of illusions, and takes thought with himself. The possession of religious truth is not to be separated from this personal attitude of mind. Whoever does not fight for it does not possess it. But this fight does not mean the senseless and vain endeavour to appropriate ideas that are foreign to us. We fight this battle only when we honestly humble ourselves before the truth that we ourselves have recognised, before the good that we ourselves discern, and before the power of facts which we ourselves experienced as being God's revelation of Himself to us. Therefore the religious conviction which regards itself as a work of God's is in no respect a lazy acceptance of a thing ready-made, but a man's own creation of the thing he is convinced of, and hence from beginning to end, life and movement.

### XC. *Romanist piety has little of the progressive vigour which marks true religion.*

But then even the Catholic piety which

Mausbach describes—the piety which hinders "the progressive energy of human thought" —is at any rate a piety that has been profoundly corrupted. For real religion in every man is itself the utmost energy of uncompromisingly progressive thought, and a resolute obedience to sincerity in a mind which shakes itself free from idle reverie. The religion cultivated in the Church of Rome has little of that in it. On the other hand, it is untiring in labour to bind on men a burden of notions which the Church drags along through history under the name of ecclesiastical doctrines without those who profess them daring to ask themselves whether these notions give expression to what they for their own part are able to conceive of as truth.

XCI. *Hence Rome's narcotising influence on progress is felt by the nations as a hindrance; and we cannot leave Romanism alone.*

By that the Church touches the very

sinews of the life of humanity. She cripples the moral sense that is fighting its way out to clearness of view and to independence: she cripples, that is to say, morality. But the strongest nations will not endure that what alone can give them the most effectual lift into the movement of society should always be crushed whenever it is aroused within the individual. Wherever the Catholic Church is nowadays supreme, there is found, as an inevitable result, intellectual backwardness, because in our day this Church can hold its own only where it sends to sleep the eager impulse to seek for sincerity. But if this narcotising process succeeds, the ruin of what is human is begun. The Church of Rome has therefore her right place to-day only on the ruins of civilisation. On the other hand, wherever a nation is making a future for itself, the presence of the mass of Romanist Christianity collapsing into ruins and shut out from the common life, cannot but be felt as the presence of some dead thing. The conscious-

ness of this fact is aroused wherever life is stirred to progress, among ourselves, in Austria, France, Italy. For this reason I cannot do, as Adloff expresses the wish that I should: "He might leave the Church of Rome to herself." For it is our duty to share in the work of developing that consciousness. I hope, too, that those who are morally alive in the Church of Rome will ultimately thank us for this loving service by themselves pressing for a reform of ecclesiastical doctrine and of ethical practice.

XCII. *Insincere 'faith' in what does not seem real is essential to Romanism and repugnant to true Protestantism.*

When a man strives to regard as true for God's sake ideas which do not, as far as he can see, form part of the expression of what is real, he is striving to dissociate himself from goodness, and therefore from God. In God's world he stands as a man of God only when he honestly opens his heart to what is real—

which he does not need to 'believe' first—and champions the truth which he has himself learned to know. If, on the other hand, he deliberately for God's sake represents ideas foreign to him as positions defended by him, he is extinguishing the light in his own soul. The Church of Rome seems to be able to go on existing only on condition that she requires insincere faith of this kind. On the other hand, Protestant Christianity really comes to herself only when she guards herself against this disturbance of her inner purity.

### XCIII. *Rome has to keep men half-awake.*

As long as this state of things continues in the Church of Rome she succeeds in crushing whatever is really alive in all places where the ultimately inevitable result has occurred and men have awaked from the state of merely being accustomed to traditional conceptions. For then the men she holds fast must deny the intellectual needs that they themselves feel. Because this Church can

minister only to unconscious or half-awake persons, she tries to keep them all in that condition. She can achieve that result only by persuading men, whenever they tend to become more alive, that becoming alive means going to perdition.

XCIV. *Real morality does not arise from obedience to rules with ever so high a sanction, but in our own choice of goodness.*

So long as men are ready to obey laws only, without themselves willing these laws, they are hiding from themselves the moral command. The Church of Rome leads men into that condition. Ideas which, especially among Christians, can count on complete acquiescence, serve her and many others who think they are far beyond Romanist ways, as approved methods for setting morality on one side. Such is the lofty idea that God's will or our own inmost nature prescribe for us rules to guide our will. But these are conclusions about morality, not explanations of morality itself.

The result is that serious reflection on moral subjects is given up, if these ideas are given as the answer to the problem of the reason for the obligation of morality. It is plain that commands which we should regard only as a tax imposed by the powers referred to and not as the free expression of our own moral sense, have no longer any moral quality. They allow the man who obeys them to follow other paths in regard to what he wishes for himself. Such a man remains selfish even if as an act of obedience he gives all he has to the poor and his body to be burned. Moral obedience begins first of all with moral independence. We must ourselves discern that it is only cordial fellowship with others which can be conceived of as for us the one aim in its own nature unalterable. We must ourselves recognise that to seek after that is the only thing that constitutes a sincere will, and that willingness to serve is our true independence and our true honour. It is then that we begin to obey sincerely, or, in other words,

morally. The Church of Rome, on the other hand, does not see that morality lies in this free grasp of the one and only thing that can give an unalterable direction to the will. Under a cloud of rules she conceals the truth that nothing more is required of man than a unified moral sense conscious of its eternal law and strength to find its own way to the eternal goal: in other words, love that is morally in earnest. On the other side she is busily engaged in what is in fact from the point of view of those rules quite in order. She shows men how they may most comfortably settle with them. In doing so, however, she leaves room for heroic natures that in the fervid desire to make sure of their own salvation are bent on making their burden as heavy as possible. But neither the comfortable way recommended by the ecclesiastical advocates, nor this heroic asceticism, has a glimmer of moral earnestness about it. For in neither the one nor the other is there a will which has become independent and sincere in virtue of

its own perception that its aim is eternally right.

xcv. *This produces unreality, which is a danger to all religion and to all morality.*

In that kind of religion there lies the same germ of corruption as in this kind of morality. People think they are turning to God when they turn their backs on what they themselves perceive to be real. And people think they are doing what is good when they listen to other people, and in doing so neglect to make clear to themselves what they are able to recognise for themselves to be right. In both directions they are quite ready to seem different from what they are. They declare to be true views which they do not regard as true. They find comfort in regulations for their actions, though they have found no peace in any perception of the eternal value of those regulations. The deadly danger of this life of pretence is of course very close to all religion and all morality. For no one among us can be

earnestly religious without profound reverence for traditional ideas, or morally active without profound attachment to traditional customs.

XCVI. *Rome's title to fame lies in the emphasis she lays on reverence, but she does not see the danger of insincerity it brings with it.*

All that is alive in history at the present day is in the strength of its nature linked with the results of the life of the past. Reverence guards this deeply hidden connection, and without reverence there is no prosperity and long life on the earth. The wordly wisdom of reverence is part of the Church of Rome's title to fame. But her fatal mistake is that she sees no danger in it. Instead of drawing a clear distinction between moral and religious conduct on the one hand, and the natural obligation resulting from reverence on the other, she tries to resolve them both into reverence. The natural result is that the root common to both, namely, serious reflection or sincerity, is destroyed in Romanist Christianity.

Christians of this kind generally fail altogether to notice that their eyes are turned towards what is without only, because the true subjectivity remains hidden from them, namely, unhesitating surrender to what they perceive for themselves.

XCVII. *We must find the true relation between reverence and sincerity.*

We ourselves can become free from Romanist Christianity only by appreciating in a kindly spirit its most powerful motive. It consists in a reverence that has achieved unlimited power. This motive is understood by every Christian who has experienced what strength comes to him from a marvellously rich tradition. But we must also discern how the unlimited supremacy of reverence must end in evil. But to discern this should surely not prove difficult to a Christian who knows by experience that he arrives at a spiritual relation to the tradition of the Bible only when he thinks on his own account, when he becomes

sincere, and in consequence independent. In separating ourselves from Romanist Christianity we must set ourselves the task of fighting till we win for ourselves the right relation between reverence and the sincerity which unfolds itself in morality and religion.

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NOTE.

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